

Memories of a Dying Soldier

by Spartan Elessar

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Summary:Someone once told me that before you die, you see your whole life in front of you. Is that what I am seeing now?

Maybe.....THE SERIES IS COMPLETE.....Please Read and Review it!

1. Prologue: This is how it begins!

Memories of a dieing Solider

Prologue

August 30, 2552

Orbital Defense Generator

Planet Reach

Sergeant Logan Kelso, a thirty eight years old soldier, looked out of his drench. All he could see was a covenant cruiser hovering over surface of Reach and unloading its ground force. He eased back into his pit and switched on his radio.

"This is Alpha, come in Charlie team. I repeat, come in Charlie Team," he barked. Nothing but static filled the radio.

"I don't think they made it sir," said a young marine, who sat with him inside the pit.

"Don't give up your hope," he whispered. Even though he knew the young marine, Kelly, was right, he refused to accept it. The thought made his stomach to dive uneasily.

Ever since the Covenant forces found out the humans, they have been invading their territories. They glassed the planets from their orbits, without mercy. Soldiers have died, burned and decayed trying to repel the Covenant forces. But so far they have none

succeeded.

Human colonies fell under the Covenant's extermination like a fly caught on a spider's web. None of the soldiers had hope; however, none was ready to accept it. There was still hope.

Planet Reach was the Human's strongest hold. None dreamed that it will be attacked by the aliens. But no one is left to say the otherwise.

A huge Covenant armada landed on the planet's doorstep and started to bombard it with their high power plasmas. This is what they call as 'Glassing a planet'.

When they glass a planet, they shoot this high power plasma on the planet's surface. This will melt any living creatures that lived on the land. The rivers, lakes, seas and oceans evaporate under the heat, causing the temperature to increase and within days "no, within hours, the planet will be void of any living things.

The same thing is happening to Planet Reach, thought Sgt. Logan miserably.

"I don't see any hope sir," complained the young marine. His voice had no expression and his face had no light. He looked like a living dead.

Logan turned around and met the young man's eye and said, "What are you talking about? You are still alive, I am still alive" now that's a bad news to those Covenant's," he forced a smile, "There is always hope. Find it."

Kelly nodded his head and looked at his assault rifle.

"Charlie team, do you hear me? Over," he tried once again. There was no answer. He threw his radio in frustration and guilt.

Guilt "that's the word haunts him. He sends his own team into the mouth of death. This very thought disturbed him.

The orbital guns, a very powerful machine also called as MAC guns, are stationed on a planet's orbit. They are the defense system of a planet. Planet Reach has these guns all around its orbit.

These guns can punch a hole on a Covenant battle ship's shield. They can reload within seconds and can play tricks on any alien ships that happen to be on its track. Too many Covenant ships have fallen to its onslaught and some others are punctured badly too.

Therefore, the covenant has sent multiple amount of Covenant drop ships to the surface, so that they can take down the Orbital Defense Generators, which powers the MAC guns.

So marines have been stationed on all the Orbital Defense Generators for one purpose, save it by all cost. If the Covenant manages to destroy a Generator, it is equal to destroy a MAC gun to pieces.

So Sgt. Logan Kelso and his men were stationed on an ODG, facility B-207.

When a covenant drop ship landed near the facility, Logan sent his Charlie team to take them out. However, he didn't see the flank the aliens have set on the other side of the road. When the Charlie team disappeared into the woods to clear the threat, they disappeared forever " never to return.

"I give up," muttered Logan. All now that is left of Alpha team is he and Kelly.

"We two can't protect the ODG, we need back ups. Call for re-enforcement," ordered Logan. His face was grim and tired.

Kelly picked the radio and did as Sergeant ordered. After few minutes, he gave Logan a negative answer.

"That's it, I am going in. I can't wait till they come and get us. I am taking the fight to them. Load up Kelly. We are gonna fight together or we die together," he smirked and loaded his MA5B Assault rifle.

The ammunition read full, he checked his own armory. They had two M90 Shotguns (Which is gas powered, and fires 8 gauge magnums), three M6D pistols (has 12.7 mm) and two SSM Rocket launchers, which has two high explosive 102 mm rockets.

"Take the rocket launchers, a shotgun, Fragmented grenades and extra clips for your MA5B," said Logan to Kelly, and he obeyed.

Logan took some extra clips for his Assault rifle, picked up a rocket launcher and grabbed some of the Covenant's plasma grenades. He checked his weaponries one last time and gave a move-out sign.

Sgt. Logan and Kelly jumped up from their pit and crouched to the nearby trees. The B-207 Facility is located inside a forest's clearing. So they were surrounded by trees, which once was green and lively. Mountains covered the background. The sky was unusually pale and air was hot.

Sweat dripped from Logan's forehead, the temperature increased every minute. This is not his first experience, he has been and seen Covenant's glassing before. However, he escaped, he was not so sure about this time.

Both the soldiers leveled themselves to the ground and watched the alien's battle cruiser through their binoculars.

The silver ship was hovering over a hundred feet above the ground and a huge purple light was connecting the belly of the ship and the ground. Troops were unloaded through the bright light.

Hundreds of them landed on the surface. Covenant warriors differed; they consist of Elites, Jackals, Grunts and the soldier's nightmare " Hunters.

They all formed a camp within their territory and waited, for what? Logan wondered.

"You see that shade soldier?" he pointed a Covenant's stationary gun, which was located near a tent. Kelly shifted his focus to it and nodded.

"That tent, near the shade, has Covenant weapons, I think. I am pretty sure they have loads of these Plasma grenades," he took one from his jacket and showed it. "If we shoot at the Shade, it will explode like a balloon and will cause a chain reaction to those grenades. That fire power can kill those pair of hunters," he whispered.

"Once we clear those guys, we are gonna use our remaining rockets to take down those immobile banshees. Then we move in and unleash a hell among them," he stopped and fixed his eye on Kelly's. "Son, I am not gonna say that we will make out of here alive. This is a one way ticket. Are you ready for this?"

Kelly took a moment to look at the sergeant's face and the Covenants. "Sir, I am with you. Lead the way," he replied briskly and gave a wearied smile. Logan returned a smile and turned away.

"On my mark!" Logan said and steadied himself. "Mark"

Kelly and he got up and shot their 102 mm high power rockets towards the Shade.

The rockets impacted the shade and blew it up into pieces. The explosion and fire did exactly as Logan intended, started a chain reaction. The Grenades blew in unison and knocked the pair of Hunters out of the action.

This sudden attacked startled the Covenant's ground force. The grunts and jackals looked around nervously. The Elites ran towards their banshee, unfortunately those flying machines exploded into plumes of fire, when another pair of rockets impacted.

Logan and Kelly threw their empty SSM Rocket launcher and divided into the mist of the aliens "mist of death."

Shards of needles and plasma hit the soldiers squarely on their chests. Both fell down the moment the needles exploded.

Kelly died on the spot, with a heavy plasma burn on his face and chest. Logan took the hit on his lower side of the stomach and fell down paralyzed.

Pain washed through his body. He could feel the burned skin and flesh but he couldn't move. His spine ran cold and his head ached. His mouth twitched as blood leaked out. The only thing that stirred was his eyes.

All he could see was the belly of the Covenant's battle ship. His vision faded for a second and came back. He could hear his low heart beat. Things seemed to move slowly to him. He felt disoriented.

White lights flashed in front of him. It flashed with every heart beat. He could feel his muscles tighten and relax.

The light was bright and it blinded him for a full second. He closed his lid and opened it, the light was there. The sound of the Covenant, the battle, the fire went mute. Everything was silent.

An unusual peace came over him and he was free of pain.
How?

Someone once told me that before you die, you see your whole life in front of you. Is that what I am seeing now?

Maybeâ€¦|

2. Chapter One

****Chapter One**:**

Lock and Load

****January 5, 2535****

****UNSC Destroyer Resolute****

****Lambda Serpentis System, Jericho VII orbit****

"Attention all combat personnel. Please report to your action stations." A rough voice echoed throughout the ship. Red lights were on and an emergency alarm went on.

"This is not a drill. I repeat, this is not a drill," the voice continued.

All the marines jumped from their beds and ran to their station in a hurry. Some were half dressed and others were sleeping.

"Hey get up! Didn't you hear the alarm?" asked Jen to his friend, who was still lying on his bed.

"I heard it," replied back the young marine gravely

"Then what are you waiting for, get up and gear up," said Jen.

The young marine got up from his bed and went to the mirror. A twenty one year old man appeared on the reflection.

"Have you never seen your face before Logan? Now gear up on the double or sergeant will have your butt whipped," warned Jen and hurried out.

Logan Kelso, a young marine, got into his armed uniform, picked his rifle and hurried after his friend.

Orbital Drop Shock Troopers (ODST Helljumpers) and marines hurried all over the battle station.

This emergency can mean only one thing; they are under attack by the most brutal force on the universe, the Covenant.

The UNSC destroyer moved as it maneuvered through the space, causing a shake inside the hull.

The marines formed a straight line in front of Sgt. Justin Den. He was a fifty years old, dark skinned man. Logan joined his friend Jen on the line and gave a crisp salute to the sergeant.

"Jericho VII is under attack. We are gonna land on the surface and neutralize the targets. We will be accompanied by the Spartans," he barked

The mention of Spartans, gave an awe and fear among the marines. None have seen a Spartan, but their reputation has preceded them.

Logan was so eager to see a Spartan; his eyes were wandering the hull in order to catch a glimpse of them. However, nobody was present, other than the marines and the ODST.

"â€¦load the pelicans on the double," shouted Sgt. Justin.

The marines ran towards the pelicans, carrying a rifle. The pelicans were UNSC's transportation. They can carry up to twenty soldiers on their compartment and a hog or a tank or weapon pods on their tail. They can fly in a zero gravity and on an atmosphere. They had a M41 LAAG fixed to their nose. Therefore, they have a little protection. However, they had few tricks of their own.

Jen and Logan loaded the pelican T-047 along with other marines. The door shut tight when the last marine docked in.

A pilot and a co-pilot occupied the cockpit. They tapped few switches on their desktop and spoke through the Pelican's speaker.

"Everything is set sarge, ready when you are," said the pilot Chris. He was a middle aged man, who had a dark hair and eyes. His voice was rough, but calm nevertheless.

"Let's wait for the signal," replied the Sergeant. He was sitting with his team, on the corner of the pelican's compartment.

The marines were tensed. They were about to engage the Covenant, one on one. The thought unnerved some. However, none of their fear came out of their grim face. They were ready for anything.

Logan shot a look through the Pelican's window, in order to look at the other pelicans. All the landing pads were filled with pelicans, save the Longswords, who were docked on the far side of the hull.

As long as he could see, the other pelicans were loading the marines, no Spartans.

"Darn it," he muttered to himself. Jen looked at him with a keen eye. Logan shook his head.

Sgt. Justin's radio opened and the voice of Captain De Blanc came out.

"Soldiers ready to undock the Resolute in five minutes," his voice was rough and it didn't betray any emotions.

The pelicans all around the bay came to life. They all roared in unison. The heart beat of Logan increased. Occasionally it skipped a beat.

A red light lit the hull as the compressed doors of the docking bay

opened. Vacuum filled the place. The space was dark and colorless.

"Here we go, hold on Gentlemen," announced the pilot of Pelican T-047.

Pelicans evacuated the ship's docking bay, one by one. When the Pelican T-047 turn came, the engines roared and the whole pelican shook for a second, before it became air-born. It turned around and flew right into the deep space.

"We have successfully launched marines. Moving to one-zero-three," announced the pilot.

The pelican shook violently, causing nausea to Logan. He controlled himself not to throw up. He clutched his rifle tightly whenever he felt like falling down.

Fear took hold of him, nothing was certain in the space. He tried to calm himself, but ended up shaking.

He closed his eyes and tried to concentrate on happy moments. None came to his mind. His brain was numb, only the dimly lit pelican's passenger compartment was visible to him.

Does everyone have this feeling? He wondered and looked around. The marines were sitting tightly to their seats with a closed expression.

"So much for a flying trip," he whispered to himself.

The Pelican gently dived and headed straight to the planet's surface. Logan could see the Planet, Jericho VII through the pilot's cockpit. It was a bright planet, which was currently under attack by the Covenants.

Speaking of Covenants, he strained a look through a window to spot the enemies ship. But all he could see was the dark space.

The pelican started to shake terribly as it entered the planet's atmosphere.

"Hold on!" warned the pilot as he clicked series of buttons.

"I will make sure of that," Jen said slowly. Logan looked up to his friend and gave a weak smile.

"You look like a ghost," said Jen, but his voice was compressed within the pelican's engine roar and the constant clattering sound of the compartment.

Logan pointed his ear with his finger and said loudly, "I CAN'T HEAR YOU."

"Never mind," mouthed Jen and looked away.

All the UNSC pelicans entered the planet's atmosphere safely as the Longswords covered their backs.

The nose of Pelican T-047 burned with dull red colored fire, leaving

a black burn on its surface. The compartment finally stopped shaking when they entered the Jericho VII.

Logan thanked God and sat up. He checked his assault rifle and it read full. He looked down and checked his other equipments as the Pelican constantly lost attitude.

"Pelican T-047 will land within ten minutes sarge," broadcasted the Pilot

Sgt. Justin nodded and stood up. "Listen up marines, we are gonna land on a very hot LZ. Our goal is to neutralize the place. Therefore, we stick together, no straying. Now gear up, don't expect a welcome party," he said loudly, trying to over come the sound of the pelican.

Everyone gave a disappointed sigh just to fulfill the joke and geared up.

The pelicans landed on a mountainside. The ocean ran south, as they faced the north. The cliffs covered their west side. The only open ground was to their north and east. Trees filled the northeast. Black smoke rose over a hundred feet above those treetops.

Marines unloaded the three pelicans, which landed on this LZ. Sgt. Justin formed a line, and jogged towards the black smoke.

Jen and Logan jogged side by side silently. The sun was high on the sky giving visibility over five miles; however, it was blocked by the dense green forest. The air was warm and windy. They could smell the salt water in it. Sand flew all around the place.

Sweat ran all over his body, however, Logan tried to concentrate on the mission.

'Keep the head in the game, Keep the head in the game' Logan repeated to himself

"What mantra are you trying to make?" asked Jen smiling. He was twenty-one years too. Both joined the UNSC forces together and passed it together. They have always been good friends.

"Spellsâ€| trying to cast some magic spells," replied Logan grinning.

After twenty minutes of jogging, they reached the forest. The smoke rose a few meters away from their point.

They could hear the whishing sound of Covenant's flying machines called as Banshee.

Sgt. Justin halted his group and divided them into three groups â€" Alpha, Omega and Charlie. Jen, Logan and two others were the Charlie team. Jen was the Charlie team's leader. Their mission is to kill the Banshees and neutralize any visible threats.

After receiving the orders, the Charlie team moved. They crouched behind a fallen tree and looked out. A huge military structure rose from the ground. It had three floors with an open terrace. Fire rose within it. Five Banshees were flying around the building, along with

four Ghosts on the ground.

"I see Five Banshees, four Ghosts and three Golden Elites. These are the visible threats, we are gonna neutralize it and allow the Alpha and Omega to enter the structure," said Jen

"Let's see what we can do about this..." said Jen and looked at their weaponries. "We need to take down the Banshees with our SSM. One of us has to spend an extra rocket to take down all the five Banshees. Therefore, I will do it. Then each one of you can take the three Ghosts down with the remaining rockets. After I reload I will take down the last Banshee and then we can neutralize the elites with grenades."

Each one of them picked a Rocket launcher and fitted it with two 102 mm high-explosive rockets.

"On my mark," Jen whispered. "Mark"

All four marines stood from behind the fallen tree, aimed at the flying banshees and squeezed their triggers.

The rockets flew with a blinding speed and hit the first four Banshees. They exploded into plums of fire and landed on the ground with a THUD. The last one fell seconds later, when the last rocket flew from Jen's launcher. In the meantime, the rest of the gang aimed the ghosts and pulled their triggers.

Ghosts and Banshees burned in huge flames, when four fragmented grenades flew into the mist of the confused Elites. After a split second, three Covenant Elite bodies fell to the ground with a small THUD.

"Target neutralized," announced Jen in his radio

"Good work Charlie. Team move in," called Sgt. Justin and Alpha and Omega moved inside the structure.

"Now we wait and cover their backs," said Jen watching the two teams enter the structure.

"Yeap, now we wait," replied Logan.

Logan could hear the fire fight that took place inside the structure, with an occasional BOOM.

Grenades, thought Logan. All four of the marines stayed alert and watched around the entrance, making sure none enters it.

Logan took his knife out and examined his face on blade's reflection. A pale, unshaved face appeared. His hair was neatly trimmed according to the military rules.

All of a sudden, the radio opened and static filled it for several seconds, then finally a voice broke through it. The voice was almost screaming.

"Come in Charlie Team, Come in over,"

"This is Charlie team, over," replied Jen

"Sarge is down, I repeat, Sarge is down" .we need immediate backup. Things are hot in here, we need" the line went dead

Jen called after the voice, but the radio remained dead. The whole team was standing on their toes when they heard the news. Everyone looked at Jen.

He watched the radio then he looked up and said, "We are going in."

3. Chapter Two

****Chapter Two****:

Hey, I am invisble

****January 5, 2535****

****UNSC armory****

****Planet Jericho VII****

Logan Kelso, Jen Fell, Howard Ryan and Ken Shun entered the military structure. The entrance was big enough for two men to walk abreast. The insides were well lit by fluorescence lamps. The armory had a long hallway, intermitted by several rooms. The structure itself was one block, in and out. A staircase was inserted on their right.

The four marines, the Charlie team, swept passed the hallway, searching all the rooms. They found several bodies of grunts and jackals laid around, no human.

"This is Charlie team, come in Alpha and Omega, over," Jen whispered into his radio, but the line was dead. He shared a tensed look with Logan, who replied back with the same.

"According to my analysis, this structure has three floors and a basement. We need to split up. Howard and Ken, you guys take the basement. Me and Logan will take the Top floors," said Jen. Howard and Ken nodded their heads and descended down the staircase, when the other two ascended it.

With the Assault rifle on ready, Logan and Jen climbed the long and broad stairs. The structure itself was unusually silent; they could hear their own breathing. Jen once again tried his radio, but it was useless.

The second floor had the exact same design, just like the first. Both searched the floor thoroughly when their radio opened. Voices and sounds entered it randomly.

"basement" come in Charlie" hot" sarge down" the line went numb. Jen and Logan hurried down the stairs to the basement.

The underground was huge. The blast door of the basement was so thick and broad. The ceiling was twenty five feet high with huge lamps. The room was filled with cabinets and tables. On the entrance, a group of marines stood to their ground and fought the Covenant forces, which

stood on the other side of the basement and attacked.

Logan and Jen joined the attack. The noise of the fire fight filled the entire basement, giving back a deafening echo. The marines crouched and stood behind a steel crate and attacked. Two many lay injured behind the old crate.

Logan crouched beside Sgt. Justin and examined him. The sergeant has taken plasma hits on his right thigh and stomach. His bleeding was temporarily stopped by bandages. He was pale and colorless. He was clinging to his life by a thread. He opened his mouth to form words, but none came.

Logan bends over closely and listens to his weak words.

"They areâ€|covering the doorâ€|go through itâ€|Facilityâ€|tunnelsâ€|attack," words sputtered out of his mouth with blood. Logan couldn't get the deep meaning, but he knew that they have to enter through the other basement door which was located on the other end and currently guarded by Covenant.

He delivered the message to Jen, he nodded back.

"Who is in charge in here now?" asked Jen over his rifle.

"You tell me," came the reply.

"Alright then, take the wounded above Omega team. Alpha and Charlie are going in," replied Jen.

Two acknowledgement signs came from Alpha and Omega.

"Good, Alpha lets give cover to the Omega and their wounded," shouted Jen

Both the team got into a straight line and covered the front entrance, as the marines carried their wounded through the blast door and climbed up the staircase.

Once everyone was out, other than Charlie and Alpha, the team spread out and attacked from different positions. Their Defensive attack was upgraded into suppressive attack.

The jackals shielded themselves and their commodores with their shields. The Elites stood behind those shields and shot at the other side of the room precisely.

The grunts ran around and hid themselves behind tables and chairs as the bullets passed over their tiny heads.

The grunts were small, a size of a dog, they wore a methane filled suit, in order to replicate their frozen home world. Some carried Plasma pistol and others carried needlers.

The jackals were relatively taller than grunts. They were skinny and their facematched perfectly their names. They carried a round, green Shield that gave them an excellent cover. These guys carried Plasma pistols.

Elites were their leaders, so called holy-warriors. They were seven

feet tall and strong. Their bodies were blue and muscular in a very odd way. They wore strong red, blue and silver armors. Their heads were extended from their shoulders, like a camel. They had four jaws, filled with sharp teeth. They were well trained with their weapons, some carried Plasma guns and others Pistols.

The marines shot back in turns, so that if his/her partner has to reload they would do so without any intermission.

Bullets and Plasmas criss-crossed the basement striking anything that lay on their path.

The bullets punctured holes on the walls, shields and on grunt's heads, whereas the Plasmas hit the tables, crates and the marine's helmet.

"Five Elites, six jackals and God-only-knows number of grunts," shouted Jen over his fire power. "We need a strategy."

Logan took a fragmented grenade and tossed it towards the jackals. The grenade hit the creature's shield and bounced back and blew harmlessly.

"Definitively," replied Logan

"Does anyone have a rocket launcher?" shouted Logan to his fellow marine

"If we had one, this fight would have over a long time ago," replied back a marine and Logan nodded in agreement.

The Elites plasma grenades flew and hit a crate or a box, clearly missing its target by a hair and detonated with a shock. These shocks often miss the nearby soldiers, but sometimes it made a marine air-borne.

"Throw the grenades in unison soldiers. On my mark," shouted Jen

Every one of the soldiers took a grenade and took off the safety pin. "MARK," shouted Jen. Hail of grenades showered over the Covenant. Some rebounded from the jackal's shields; however, others fell into the mist of the group.

The detonation threw the Elites off the ground, burning their front and killed the jackals from behind.

Grunts panicked and exited from their hiding places. Jen ordered his men to fire and they did. After few rounds, the walls were sprayed with blue, whitish glue blood.

Logan threw the empty magazine from his rifle and fitted a new one. The marines stood behind their covers for few minutes, just to make sure that their targets were neutralized. When none moved they moved to the back door.

This door was small and was covered with titanium blast armor. Jen took out his personnel data pad and scanned the basement's model map on it.

"According to my map, there is a small room on the other side of this door. I have no idea why these guys were protecting it. There is no way out of there, except for a small subway," said Jen thoughtfully.

"How big is the subway?" asked Logan

"Big enough for one of these Elites to walk straight," replied Jen

Logan thought for a second and said, "I think they are transporting something from here to the other end of the subway, or the other way around," announced Logan, lines passed over his forehead as he ran over his own words.

Jen looked at his pad and the basement. "I don't see the point. What will they take from here, weapons? As for as I know, these aliens doesn't touch our weapons, even if their life is in jeopardy," said Jen

"But we have to check this anyway, it was an order from sarge," said one of the marine. His face was expressionless, his face betrayed irritation, and he didn't like to be here, not on this planet. He had a bad feeling about it.

"Of course," replied Jen back.

A bolt of green plasma hit on Howard's knee from behind. He yelled in pain and fell down losing his balance.

Logan turned around and saw a blue grunt standing behind a fallen chair with a green plasma pistol in his hand. He rushed to the creature and hit its head with the butt of his weapon. The head crushed in and blue blood sprayed on the ground.

"Medic," shouted Jen, and a marine stepped forward. He took a moment to examine the wound. The plasma has burned through the marine's thigh armor and tore his flesh, melting some of his bones with it. He took off the burned part and treated it.

"Take him back to the Omega, and you go with him soldier," Jen ordered and the medic nodded in agreement.

"Ok let's find a way to open this door," said Jen turning towards it. A marine stepped forward and used all his tricks on it. Nothing worked, the door stayed intact.

"The covenant has shut this thing down tightly sir," reported the marine.

"Then lets use our mine," suggested one of the marines

Jen thought for a second - the sound can easily tear their ear drums apart if it detonated inside this basement, worse it can collapse the structure. Jen shook his head.

"Let's find some other way to break it," said Jen

"Why don't we follow the channel from above," said Logan. Everyone took a moment think and agreed. Jen was the last one to accept

it.

"Ok, lets go topside on the double marines," he shouted and the rest obeyed.

They followed the channel from Jen's computer pad. It took them away from the forest and into the mountains.

"Point three kilometers to the objective," whispered Jen, as he and his five men crew walked through the foot of a giant mountain. The path was rough and solid. Rocks and sands were all around the place. The sun started to pass over their heads, casting a shadow on their path ahead.

"Hold," called Jen as they reached a opening on the mountain's wall. "The opening of the subway is right inside that cave. Let's check it out."

They switched on their lights, which was on the nose of their weapons, and entered the black cave. It was dark and broad. It could have been easily missed from air, but it was visible like a big doorway on foot. Six lights penetrated through the dusts and lighted up the rock walls. The cave abruptly ended within few feet.

"I don't see anything in here," said Logan silently. The silence that filled this place was unnerving. It was quite, darn it, too quite.

The six marines searched the cave completely, keeping some pace away from the walls and staying in the middle.

Logan searched the end of the cave. It was smooth and reflected his light back to him. The cave itself was forty feet high and one hundred feet in length.

Suddenly, his eyes caught a movement, a blurry shadow. When he focused his eyes, it was gone. Illusion " thought Logan, but he gripped his rifle tighter.

"AHHHH," a scream echoed through out the cave. Logan spun around and saw a marine hung on mid air, with a blue light stick " sword coming out of his ribs.

The marine yelled and fell to the ground dead. The sword stood on the mid-air, as if it was hanging on an invisible rope. The soldiers stood there for a split second motionlessly. Then they opened up. The bullets sprayed on the cave, as rocks splinted away from the stones. But some bullets hit something on the midway, other than rocks. When the invisible object took a hit, a silver shield glowed, revealing seven foot tall elite.

The marines emptied their whole magazine on the elite, even though it tried to run outside.

When Logan's rifle read "00" the elite fell to the ground dead. A marine, who stood near Jen, emptied his remaining bullets on the fallen body, spraying black blood all around the dusty floor.

"Check the fallen soldier," ordered Jen and Logan obeyed.

He went near the immobile body and checked the pulse. Nothing, the body was cold. His chest was cut open and the insides were burned to ashes. It was too terrible to watch. He looked at Jen and shook his head.

4. Chapter Three

****Chapter 3:****

"We are not gonna survive this!"

****January 5, 2535****

****An uncharted area****

****Planet Jericho VII****

Five marines stood in the cave staring at their fallen brother. Uncertainty ran through Logan's mind. Will his fate end up like this marine? He thought "not today. He threw the empty clip out and refitted it with a new one. A pale 'Click' sound echoed into the cave as the new clip entered the rifle. His assault rifle monitor read "60" and a small arrow on the screen pointed downwards.

"Alright, lets find that entrance of the tunnel and enter it," said Jen in a low voice. Others nodded and looked down at the floor. The base was rocky and dark, gave an unnatural reflection to their lights.

"I found it," called out a marine. He was pointing his rifle at his foot and stepped back. The others stood around it. A small opening was covered by a four foot metal, laid at the far end of the cave. Two marines knelt down and carried the metal away from its place, when the other three covered their backs.

The metal gave a slight 'Screech' noise as it scratched the floor. Lights penetrated the opening and revealed a seven feet drop into the floor. Jen pointed his first two fingers to his eye and to the opening. Logan knelt and took out his fiber-optic probe. He snaked one end of his probe into the hole and connected the other end to his data pad. Darkness covered it, visibility was zero.

Jen knelt opposite to him and pointed his rifle into the hole. His torch light entered the tunnel and gave a small visual reading in Logan's pad.

"The tunnel is high enough to walk straight and it goes deep inside," reported Logan as he put his probe back inside his pocket.

"Then lets get inside and find what the covenants have in stock," said Jen. Before he could give orders, huge hoof sounds came through the tunnel. It gained speed as it came near the opening. The marines stood up in unison and pointed their rifle at the hole on sheer reflex. The sound of hoof was muffled into a confused barks and high-pitch squeals.

"What the—" started a marine but before he could finish his sentence, shards of purple needles exited out of the hole and penetrated his chest. It exploded after a split second causing the

marine to fall backwards in a shock. He died before his head hit the floor.

"FALL BACK!" shouted Jen. Logan took out a grenade, threw it inside the hole and ran back with the remaining marines. The detonation shook the ground beneath their boots. The muffled barks and squeals seized for a second. Jen and his remaining team stood outside the cave, pointing their rifles inside the cave, at the hole to be precise.

Sloppy - that was a clear sloppiness; Jen thought and cursed himself for being so stupid. He bit his teethes harder and gripped his rifle even harder. Nothing came out of the tunnel; Jen pointed Logan and pointed back into the cave.

Logan shouldered his rifle and moved towards the hole slowly "one step at a time. A drop of sweat dripped from his forehead. Man, it's hot in here, he thought. His eyes took a second to adjust to the darkness inside the cave as he stepped in. He crouched and went near the hole. He stayed away from his team's cross fire, just in case they have to open up.

"I am not going to die," he whispered and looked into the tunnel. The same whitish glue blood was spilled all over the place. He strained a look into the tunnel's deep body.

"Son of a bitch!"

A blue plasma grenade came flying out of the tunnel. Logan ducked just in time to send the grenade flying above his head. He jumped away from the hole and laid flat on his belly as the grenade detonated. His ear rang loudly and deafened him temporarily to the firefight. He looked up and saw three grunts, four jackals and two elites jumping out of the hole. "What!" he exclaimed and struggled to get up.

"LAY DOWN LOGAN," Jen's voice rang inside his head. It sounded so distant to him. He stopped struggling and laid flat on his belly, closing his eyes as bullets passed over his head.

The grunts got the first fresh hit from Marines. Those tiny monsters flipped backward and laid dead. Jackals ran away from the hole and stationed themselves into a semi circle covering their bigger allies, Elites.

Marine's bullets hit the jackal's shield harmlessly. "WE NEED TO FLANK THEM," shouted Jen from outside the cave. Logan pulled his rifle closer to him as he laid there 'acting dead'. The jackals and Elites didn't even bother to see him, their filthy eyes were searching for the other marines, who took cover behind a rock outside the cave and poured their bullets inside.

Logan swiftly spun around from his prone position and shot at the jackals, which were exposing their sides to him. They stood on a semi straight line, so when he shot -his bullets traveled all the way from the first jackal to the last. After ten seconds of continuous assault, non-stop slaughter, the jackals fell down dead. The surprised Elites spun around towards Logan and aimed their plasma rifles towards him. However, they were too late "Jen and his men entered the cave and emptied their clips on the unprotected aliens.

Elites' shield shimmered for a split second and gave away too soon. Dark blue blood sprayed all over the walls as the last remaining elite fell down.

Logan jumped up and ran out to join his remaining team. Only four more marines were left " Jen Fell, Logan Kelso, Ken Shun and Ray Reno - depressing!

"Let's fall back to our LZ and call for re-enforcement. We need back-up in order to enter that hole. Come on, let's move," ordered Jen.

Others ran away from the cave and ran towards their LZ. It was a long way back, the sun started to sink into the horizon. They entered the forest and ran with out looking back.

"Sir, do you want me to call in the Omega team?" Ray asked who currently had the radio system. "No, they would have evacuated a long time ago. However, contact the other base and call for re-enforcement for us," he said back.

Ray tried his radio, but it was hard to operate in motion. Therefore, he called the team to a halt. "Alright, try now," said Jen as he bent over to gain his breath. Logan and Ken stood facing opposite direction covering Ray and Jen's backs.

Ray took few minutes to find a frequency and call for help. His eyes betrayed frustration and anger when he received static as an answer. "Try again," said Jen and he obeyed.

A fear took hold Logan's mind. They were surrounded by a thick green forest; the ground was rough and hard. The breeze was warm and mild. However, something else disturbed him. He felt like someone watching them silently. He turned from tree to tree with his rifle at ready. The leaves made soft noises as the wind brushed them, alerting Logan every second. His head still ached from the detonation of the grenade. He took his left hand and ran his hair over his forehead. He took a moment to examine his hand, the pale skin was covered with dark blood and his suit was covered with those grunt's slimy blood. It reflected light as if it was made out of radium.

His thought was intermitted when Ray cursed loudly who received no reply.

"Try again," said Jen who was irritated by Ray's attitude and to the fact they are sitting here like ducks.

"I AM TRYING," yelled Ray.

"Watch your bloody attitude marine," warned Jen

Both marines stood their face-to-face glowing at each other. "Cut it out," called Ken and Logan nodded in agreement.

"Ray, just shut your mouth and try the radio," said Logan turning around. But he got an explosion as a reply. A plasma grenade blew right beside him and threw Logan and Jen five yards away from the explosion. Ken took the heavy hit and fell down in a shock. Ray ran and took a tree's bark as a cover. Jen and Logan composed themselves

and hid behind a rock.

"Where the hell did it come from?" shouted Ray from his hiding place, which was behind Logan and Kelso.

"I don't know. You keep trying that radio -now," Jen shouted back and got an anguish smirk as a reply.

Logan, who crouched behind a four feet tall rock, peeked out and saw ahead of him. Sounds of hoofs came towards them. Even though he couldn't see them, he knew there were outnumbered at least by four to one.

"What do we do now?" he asked Jen, who looked back gravely and shook his head.

"We have no way out. If we run blindly they will track us down and kill us and if we stay here and show some resistance we might stay alive a bit longer, at least till the re-enforcement arrives," said Jen. Logan took a moment to analysis the situation and Jen's suggestion. "Lets show some UNSC Hard-core marine's power," said Logan with a faint smile.

"We are gonna cover your butt from here Ray. Keep trying that radio," shouted Jen and looked up from the rock.

The sound of Covenant ground force grew higher and higher every few seconds. The ground shook beneath their legs. Logan and Jen looked confused by a loud roar that approached them. Logan strained a look and saw a huge covenant tank, also called as Wraith, hovering towards him accompanied by grunts, jackals, Elites and Damn it, Hunters. If that Wraith fired, they will be vaporized along with this rock and become a history - thought Logan.

"Shit," he whispered

"What?" Jen asked puzzled

"We are so dead," Logan replied.

5. Chapter Four

****Chapter 4:****

"_My God, just look at them!_"

****January 5, 2535****

****An uncharted area, Grid nineteen by twenty seven****

****Planet Jericho VII****

"We are screwed!" yelled Ray from behind Logan and Jen

"Shut up! Are you working on that radio?" asked Jen with frustration and anger

"Why, we are not gonna be alive. That tank is gonna kill us all. Even if the re-enforcement arrives, it will be for our burial details,"

shouted back Ray, whose voice was shaky and his face was having a panic attack.

"You are gonna kills us all Ray. Call for re-enforcement now or I will come back there and whip yourâ€|" but Jen's voice was interrupted by a huge roar.

"Cut it out guys. We have devils in our doorstep, lets focus," said Logan, who was amazingly calm.

The wraith and the Covenant soldiers were one hundred feet away from Logan and Jen. Both loaded their assault rifle and took grenades out.

"I assume you have a plan Logan," asked Jen looking out from his cover

"Plan?" he laughed softly and looked at his friend. "My only plan is not to die."

"Sounds good to me," agreed Jen

Five Elites, ten Jackals, Twenty Grunts and two hunters walked beside the twenty foot high purple-blue armored tank. They all moved fast and steady, their progress was quickâ€|ninety feetâ€|eighty.

"Are you ready?" asked Logan, whose nerves forsake him at the last minute. He was literally shaking. "If you have a better plan this Jen, please for God sake spit it out."

â€|seventy feetâ€|sixty feetâ€|

"I have nothing brother. Only God can help us nowâ€|" he stopped when two high powered rockets passed over his head.

"What theâ€|"

The two rockets hit perfectly on the Tank's nose, turning the solid mass into broken plumes of fire pieces. Surprised and shocked, the covenant stopped dead on their track and looked at the source of that attack. Nothing was visible.

Logan, Jen and Ray's expressions were no different from those surprised Elites. Either of the group couldn't see the new comer.

SWISH

Four shots rang low on the mist, four jackals fell down dead. After a few second pauses, another four distant shot rang and another four Jackals fell down dead â€" very accurate head shots.

"I think the cavalry has arrived," whispered Ray and Logan and Jen nodded their head dumbly.

The Elites, Hunters, Grunts and two more Jackals looked dumb-founded. No visible threats? What in the world is happening in hereâ€|BANG

Two rockets came soaring fromâ€|.uh nowhere and hit the pair of

Hunters squarely on their chests. The heavy sack of organisms fell down like a stone dropped on a still water.

The Elites charged blindly forward, not sure where to go. The Grunts and Jackals followed their big allies.

"They are running towards us," said Logan

"Hmm, yes," agreed Jen

"Uhâ€¦what do we do?"

Four sniper shots and continuous shots from an assault rifle fired. Once again the Covenant was caught by surprise; these shots came from their back. The bullets got the targets accurately. Grunts flipped from end over end, Jackals fell down from the sniper shots and Elites became the prey for the unknown predators. All the remaining Covenant threat was neutralized and God only knows who did thisâ€¦where is this mysterious cavalry or the invisible ones?

When all the visible threats were neutralized, Logan, Jen and Ray slowly got up from their hiding places and looked around nervously. They stood there and watched around for full three minutes when they finally saw something, a shadow behind a shadow. Something side stepped them, the three marines spun around in fear.

The trio's mouth fell open in pure shock. A seven foot tall, green armored, human â€" a Spartan stepped forward. Logan, who always wanted to see a Spartan, was now dumb-founded. Jen had no feeling other than â€" _Is he a human or an alien?_ And Ray's face was twitching with surprise. None of them expected a Spartan to be their back-ups â€" a sweet shocker.

Three more Spartans came out from behind them, one had a sniper rifle, another one had a Rocket launcher and the remaining two Spartans had a standard UNSC assault rifle. One of the Spartans stepped forward and stood in front of the Marines. His HUD read **'Master Chief petty officer'**

The marines snapped into attention and gave a sharp salute in unison. The Spartan, called as Master Chief, returned the salute.

"At ease." Master Chief said. He had a deep rough voice and his expressions were hidden behind his faceplate. "There is a Pelican waiting for immediate evac marines. Gather your gears and go to LZ."

"But sir," started Logan. "We can still fight. Can we give some assistance?" he finished with an unsure tone. What kind of assistance can three marines give to Spartans?

Master Chief looked at him for a second and nodded his head. The marines were not sure what was going inside his head, but they know one thing for sure â€" they have to fight with these _super humans_ or as some say â€" _The immortal ones_, just because Logan couldn't keep his big mouth shut.

"Kelly," Master Chief called and a Spartan stepped forward. "You take the three marines, save the Omega team and load the Pelican. You will be the Blue team leader," he said

"Yes sir," the female Spartan replied. Another shocker - a female Spartan? â€" too much to swallow, thought Logan.

"The rest of the team, Linda and Fred will be with me â€" the red team. We are gonna neutralize the cave and the surroundings. We will meet you at 0500. If we are delayed, don't wait for us, take the remaining marines and fly," he finished, then he nodded to Kelly and disappeared into the woods with two other Spartans. Thier movements were quick and sly, almost undetectable.

A question aroused within Logan. "Ma'am?" he called

The remaining female Spartan â€" Kelly turned and looked at him. _Jesus, she is taller than me_, he thought.

"I have a question on our objective," he said

"What is it?" she asked

"Are we supposed to save the Omega team?"

"Yes Marine,"

"But we released them a long time ago from that UNSC armory, shouldn't they have called for an evac and left the base?" he said, still staggering to find the right words. Somehow she repressed him â€" big time.

"Yes they did call for evac, but their Pelican got hit. So they are currently holding position near the armory. It's our duty to find and safely escort them to the Pelican. Is it clear?" she asked. Her voice was not rude or harsh, but plain.

The other two marines, Jen and ray, who were looking at the Spartan dumbly came back to their sense and replied, "Yes ma'am," along with Logan.

"Alright let's move," she ordered and the marines obeyed.

6. Chapter Five

****Chapter 5:****

A pleasant memory

****January 5, 2535****

****UNSC Armory, grid twenty by eighteen****

****Planet Jericho VII****

The Spartan and three marines traveled non stop silently. They were two miles away from the armory and the sky darkened as the sun disappeared behind the horizon. Logan could see the outline of the forest that surrounded the armory. He and the two other marines were traveling behind the Spartan, as Kelly took the lead. He was admiring the way the Spartan moved. Her movement was so soft and silky. He has never seen anyone move this smooth. Even though her armor was no

different from the other Spartans, the way she interacted was definitely feminine.

His eyes were lingering on Kelly's back rather than on the surrounding. On the other hand, Jen shot a brief glance on the Spartan for every few seconds, as if expecting an answer from her for his unmentioned question. Ray was professional or just feeling less. He just ran with his eyes all around the place, expecting a sudden attack.

Kelly stopped abruptly and motioned her followers to halt. The four Soldiers took a cover behind an old tree. Kelly looked ahead and watched silently. The marines tried to follow her glance, but it was too dark for them to figure anything out. They were exactly one hundred yards away from the armory. And they yet to know why they stopped here -caution maybe?

Kelly turned around and looked at the marines. "I am going to take a look around and see if the place is clear. If they the place is too hot, I am going to neutralize them. In the meantime, please wait for my signal. When you get mine, enter the armory from the back and join the marines who are pinned inside. Once I clear all the targets from our HQ to the LZ, then I will signal in. Then you take the wounded and the remaining marines to the LZ. I will cover your back. Is it clear?" she finished in a clear tone. Her voice was not more than whisper, but it was crystal clear.

The trio nodded their heads in agreement. Then Kelly nodded back and sprinted into the darkness like a bullet " a silenced bullet.

"Jesus, look at the way she ran " like a wind," whispered Logan

"I have never seen anyone move that fast," agreed
Ray

"Definitively," added Jen still looking at the path the Spartan flew away.

The three marines sat silently with full alert. They had their rifles ready and their eyes were jumping from a shadow to shadow. The trio looked like a tiger crouched behind a bush ready to charge.

The darkness covered the forest and the air grew warmer. They could smell the salt on their lips; the air was less humid and tense. The night was so quite, they could hear the distant roar of the sea. The dark sky was filled with stars and the moon was unusually big, it lit the valley. The quite night was interrupted when the marines' radio opened.

"Come in Blue team, over," Master Chief's voice broke in

The marines straightened a bit in reflex. Chief's voice had nothing but power and control. Even those Covenants will cover before him. Even among the Spartans " he was the best.

"This is Blue team over," Kelly replied

"Your status Kelly," Chief asked

"Sir, I am engaging the enemy through stealth. The area is not too hot; within minutes my blue team will enter the base and cover the rest of the survivors. We will reach our Pelican before 0500. Over," she said

"Good. We have neutralized the enemies. We will reach the Pelican approximately 0450, met you there. Be careful Blue Team," Chief said

"You too John," replied Kelly through the radio

"John? Is that Chief's name?" whispered Logan

"No it's my father's name," whispered back Jen- sarcasm alert!. Logan hates that, so he shut his mouth.

The radio was silent for few seconds, then another male Spartan voice broke in, "I am driving the Pelican Kelly. Just say you know." His voice was very friendly but not unprofessional

"Yea sure," smiled Kelly. Once again Chief voice came in, "Alright Blue Team, take care, Spartan-117 out." The line went dead.

No more conversation came through the marines' radio. So they once again shifted their attention to their surroundings.

"Have you really seen a Spartan's face?" started Logan

"I have never even seen a Spartan before," replied Jen and Ray showed his agreement too.

"I bet she has a very pretty face inside that rock-hard suit of hers," said Logan distantly

"You better not flirt with a Spartan Logan, or you will probably end up in a ditch with minus head," said Jen grinning

"I am not flirting here. I just stated my opinion," replied Logan who was turning red.

After few longing minutes, Kelly's voice broke through Blue Team's radio. "Blue team come in over."

"This is Blue team over," Jen replied

"Alright Team, prepare to move in on my mark. Be silent and wily," she paused for a second and continued, "One more thing - please turn off your radio before making a private conversation Gentlemen."

"Yes ma'am. Sorry ma'am," staggered Jen, unsure of what to say

"Sorry ma'am," added Logan, who turned complete red due to embarrassment.

"Ok, wait for my Mark," and she disconnected the line.

Jen made sure twice that his line was switched off and sighed. Logan, who was at the peak of embarrassment, tried to change the topic by saying, 'The night was very clear.' Unfortunately it didn't work, Ray

burst out into a silent laughter for full sixty seconds until tears came out from his eyes. Jen looked away trying to hide his laughter inside his palm. Logan stood there like an idiot unsure of what to do or what to say.

The radio opened again. "Team move in," Kelly ordered and the marines obeyed.

They silently proceeded towards the armory taking cover behind trees and bushes. It took twenty minutes to reach the back of the armory due to their sneaky ness. Since they approached the structure from the south, they were facing the back of the building, which stood inside the forest clearing covered with shadows.

Two Elites and three grunts laid down dead in front of them. They searched for any other visual targets. There was none " they couldn't find either a Covenant or their team leader.

The back door was buried inside an open pit that had five feet of depression from the floor.

The three marines approached the door in a triangle form, covering each others back. Logan took out his lock breaker and opened the metal door. It gave away easily with a soft screech noise. Then all the three marines entered the structure, it was as same as before, with one single hallway intermittedby several rooms. They switched on their lights and moved in slowly. The hallway was dark minus the moon light that entered from open front door. The only sound that was audible was their soft foot steps. Jen gave out an UNSC "_All-clear_" signal through his open channel. After few minutes he received one back.

"They are in the basement," whispered Jen. "This is Blue team. Come in Blue team leader, over," heradioed

"This is Blue team leader," Kelly's soft and calm voice came in, "What is it?"

"The marines are in the basement, we are going to approach them ma'am," he said

"Good. Neutralize any threats that stands between you and your objectiveand bring back the marines topside on the double. We are running out of time. I have cleared our pathway to the LZ, just for now. I think we will have company soon," she announced

"Yes ma'am, I understand. Jen out." He switched the radio off and signaled his partners to follow him.

They silently swiped the hallway and the staircase with their rifles and descended towards the basement. Jen and Ray took the opposite side of the basement door, when Logan stood on top of the stair watching the hallway.

The double door was closed and the place was dead silent. Jen once again gave an '_All clear_' sign and asked the Omega team to open the door. He didn't receive an answer right away, after few silent minutes the door popped open. The basement was quite dark, Jen and Ray switched on their night visions and peeked inside.

"Thank goodness to see you sir. We thought we were dead in here. I never knew you would get our signal," said a marine who came forward from inside. Eight other marines stood near him, all except one were badly wounded.

"Where are the others?" Jen inquired.

"They didn't make it sir. We were attacked from two fronts, one from inside - that back basement door, the one you followed and from the topside. So we were pinned in here for almost five hours. A couple hours ago there was a huge fire fight between us and those bastards. We were running low on ammo, so we used the lotus mine to blow up the other side basement door." It was true, the door Jen and his team investigated on the noon was completely collapsed. Nothing can go in or out. "So we successfully sealed the that side.

"We were just wondering why things up there were awfully silent. Now we know why you guys must have cleared them all," said the marine with a tone of relief which was shared by the other eight, too.

"The enemy is neutralized, that's true Marine, but we didn't do it, nor did we pick up your distress signal. In a matter of speaking we were rescued too. We three are just assisting the ones who saved us and they are here to save your team too," said Jen honestly

"_They_, Sir?" asked the marine questioningly

"Yes, the _Spartans_ are here," he announced

At the mention of their name, all nine marines snapped into attention and looked at the doorway expecting to see a Spartan standing outside.

"They are here sir?" the marine asked

"Yes, but right now we have to hurry. One of the Spartans is our current team leader, is standing outside covering our backs. So let's hustle up, a pelican is waiting for us," he hurried. Jen and Ray helped few marines, who were badly wounded to walk on their own and started to evacuate.

"Is the top side clear Logan?" Jen asked

"So far so good, hurry up," he replied back

The nine marines and Jen and Ray came topside and stood at the entrance of the armory. None of them could spot the Spartan, she was totally invisible. All they could see was this huge massacre -Elites, Grunts and Jackals laid dead on the ground under the moon light. To their surprise, a pair of Hunters laid dead near the doorway.

"Ma'am, we are topside. Awaiting your orders," Jen announced in his radio

"How many wounded do you have Blue team?" Kelly asked

"I have nine wounded ma'am. I don't think they can move on their own and it will be darn difficult if the LZ is too far," replied Jen

"Not to worry Blue team, this is the LZ and the Pelican is on the way. Hold your position," she said

"Roger that," and all the marines stood behind the entrance door and waited.

After two painful minutes they heard a distant rumble, unmistakably a Pelican's engine approached them from east.

"This is Spartan-043 over," came in a male voice through their radios. More Spartans how splendid, thought Logan who was supporting two marines under his arms.

"Come in Will, this is Spartan-087," Kelly replied back

"Is the LZ clear Kelly?" asked Spartan Will. His voice was rough but not unfriendly.

"It's clear, you can land any minute now," Kelly assured him

"Roger."

After a small circle around the armory, the Pelican landed in front of the structure. The aft doors opened and two green armored, half ton Spartans stepped outside from the Pelican's cockpit.

Out of nowhere Kelly came out, startling two marines to their deaths. Then the three Spartans, along with Jen, Logan and Ray, loaded the Pelican with their wounded.

"What about Chief?" a nearby Spartan spoke. It was not Will; it was another female Spartan who came with him.

"Chief said he will be here approximately 0450 Grace," said Kelly. The marines in spite of their pain, they silently sat and watched the Spartans closely, who stood outside and talked with their weapons ready.

"It's almost time," replied the male Spartan, whose eyes were darting from the armory to the forest.

A huge explosion echoed out of the armory. The Spartan's pointed their weapons lightening fast at the entrance door.

"It must be the basement door. I think the Covenant must have broken our barrier sir," announced an Omega Team marine.

Will signaled Kelly and Linda to enter the Pelican's Cockpit and he moved slowly towards the entrance. Kelly and Linda strapped themselves into the pilot and co-pilot seat and waited silently. The marines looked around nervously gripping their weapons.

Will stopped in front of the entrance and lowered his weapon because three more figures came out. They were bigger than normal humans, but they were not Covenants — Spartans. Chief and his red team exited and walked towards the pelican followed by Will.

He and his team were covered with dirty Covenant blood. Jen and Logan

wondered how they cleared that whole area single handedly. _Maybe, the stories about Spartans were true_, Logan thought. He still had nothing but admiration to these special heroes, who were thought to be the ones who will change the tides of the war. Especially the one who leads them " John 117.

Every one loaded the Pelican and strapped themselves into the compartment seats except for one, Chief. He was the last man to load the pelican; he stood motionlessly on the edge of the aft compartment and watched the other passengers.

"Is every one of the marines rescued Spartan-087?" he asked

"Yes sir, our objective is complete," replied Kelly from the cockpit as she prepared to take-off the Pelican.

Master Chief nodded in satisfaction and said, "Mission accomplished."

7. Chapter Six

****Chapter 6:****

Knock Knock

"_Who's there?_"

****July 17, 2552****

****Grid twenty five by sixteen " Two miles away from Cote D'Azur****

****Alpha Base****

****Planet Sigma Octanus IV****

It has been seventeen years since Planet Jericho VII was glassed by the Covenants, ever since Logan Kelso was deeply troubled and was draining out of hope. His best friend, Jen Fell was transferred to another planet (Millions of light-year away) under one of ONI's "Classified" missions " _Damn them! " He thought. It has been six years since he has last seen Jen.

Under these hard seventeen years, the only good thing that happened to him was his promotion. Now he was called as ****Sergeant Logan Kelso****. _A big achievement_, he smirked. He has seen too many deaths, too many heart breaks and too many sacrifices. But yet to see those Covenants fall.

Jericho VII was his first experience to see a planet been glassed, unfortunately it was not his last one to witness either. Too many colonies have fallen; it was a total extermination of Human kind. The very thought unnerved him. Both the outer colonies and the inner ones fell into the Covenant's hand with ease. If they don't do something, then there will be nothing left to do at the end.

Pushing these painful thoughts away, Logan got up from his bed. He checked the clock and was surprised by the time, he has hardly slept. He pushed his bed covers off and walked to his mirror. It was small,

but it clearly reflected his face. He has young yet old. The ongoing battles have aged him even though he was just thirty eight.

He still wonders how he survived all these years, he was neither the best leader nor the best soldier, but somehow he and his team survived and finished their objectives successfully. _After all, there is someone up there watching me_, he thought. He dressed himself and walked out of his tent. His base was near the huge city called as Cote D' Azur. Their only objective was to protect those hundreds of civilians in that city.

"Good morning sir," a young marine called as Kelly stepped forward.

His name â€" **Kelly**, always brought back memories, pleasant memories about the Spartans. He has never forgotten it; somehow those events were carved inside his mind.

"Good morning," he replied back

Five marines were under his command and those five were the best, according to him. They have proved themselves note-worthy continuously after every single battle. They don't even hesitate to follow his command even it means certain death.

"Status," he asked

"Sir, we are getting confirmed reports from UNSC Destroyer _Iroquois_ that they are engaging Covenant fleets (two frigates, one destroyer, one carrier). This can't be a good news sir," a marine called as Thomas replied. He was the radio guy, as they called him

"Of course it's not a good news marine," replied Logan. More trouble he thought. "So how many UNSC battle ships are currently protecting this planet?"

Thomas fell silent and his head slowly sank, "Only one sir. Just the UNSC Destroyer _Iroquois_ commanded by Captain Keyes."

"What!"

Disbelief ran across Logan's face accompanied by anger. "Sigma Octanusfour has more than one million humans, but all they could send is just one Battle ship? That ship will be vaporized even before it can engage the enemy," said Logan, whose anger was increasing by every second. Damn the ONI, he thought once again. "Now what, they expect us to fight the entire covenant by ourselves or just stand here and watch being burned alive as these bastards stand in the orbit and glass this planet?" None of the marines had an answer; they stood there and watched him.

Lose your temper, and then you will lose your fight â€" thought Logan, so he slowly rubbed his forehead and gave a heavy sigh. Nothing is going to happen if he just whines about it, so he ordered to give a full alert to the other bases and the city.

* * *

>Two hours laterâ€|

****July 17, 2552****

****Grid twenty five by sixteen â€" Two miles away from Cote D'Azur****

****Alpha Base****

****Planet Sigma Octanus IV****

"Are you sure?" Logan asked with a tone of astonishment

"Yes sir, it's confirmed," reported Thomas with a big smile and the rest of the marines gave a big "HOO-RAH!"

"Unbelievable," Logan exclaimed. "One UNSC ship took down three Covenant battle ships?"

"Yes sir," replied back Thomas who was still grinning

"I have never heard such a thing in my entire life. Outnumbered and outgunned, _Iroquois_ looped around the Covenant bastards and destroyed them," he still couldn't believe it. It was too amazing to be true. "That guy, Captain Keyes must be more than a genius. Well then it's fair to call it as "_Keyes loop_" - a technique all the Captains should learn. That guy has some real guts," finished Logan with a broad smile

"You are right sarge," replied Kelly

BEEP

A continuous beeping sound covered their base, startling the marines.

"Shit!" exclaimed Thomas

"What is it?" asked Logan, whose smile was vanishing

The radio opened and a male voice came through it, "_ALERT! COVENANT DROP SHIPS ARE APPROACHING THE PLANET. I REPEAT, NUMEROUS COVENANT DROPSHIPS ARE REACHING THE PLANET'S SURFACE. ALL BASES PREPARE TO REPEL THEMâ€"_"

"There is no such thing as complete success. Marines load up, we got company," ordered Sergeant Logan and his marines obeyed.

"Thomas, Kelly load up the Warthogs. Jameson and Ryan take all the jackhammers we have. Sunil, you are in charge for the med kit and explosives. Come on move out, on the double," hurried Logan

"Yes sir," everyone replied in unison and hurried out.

Within five minutes, two UNSC warthogs were loaded with jackhammers, assault rifles, frag grenades, med kits and high powered anti-tank mines.

Logan and Sunil took the wheels, where as others took the passenger seats and the mounted chain guns -which was located behind the Warthog.

"Listen up marines, we are gonna enter the city and save as many people as we can, move out," he called and floored his Warthog. The heavy wheels spun around the dusty ground and moved out sounding like a thunder. "Stick close."

The two Warthogs entered the huge city within few minutes, accompanied by many other UNSC forces. Pelicans dropped marines all over the main land and went back to fetch some more. Thousands of people lived in Cote D' Azur itself, so the UNSC forces formed a strong barrier around it.

There was a huge rumble above their heads. It sounded like a thunder and lighting, accompanied by purple lights. Everyone's gaze shifted up as fear and panic crept. Hundreds of _U shaped_ Covenant purple drop ships entered the planet's atmosphere and came down at a threatening speed.

Those Covenant drop ships were as big as a Pelican and it can carry up to ten Covenant warriors no matter whatcast they are. The plasma turret that was attached to its tail shot high powered purple colored plasma at its target, burning a path before it.

Longswords, UNSC's trusted friends, engaged the enemy on air. They released a hell on those drop ships. The sky turned pale red as huge explosions occurred on the sky. Pelicans, Longswords and Covenant drop ships fell down to the ground in a huge bowl of fire as they exchanged fire fight. Soon the U shaped ships were protected by their fighters' _seraph fighters_, who entered the planet and engaged the Longswords. Using this distraction, numerous Covenant Drop ships made land fall and released their warriors.

Elites, Grunts, Jackals and Hunters exited out and engaged one on one with the UNSC marines. All hell broke lose.

"Take him down, NOW!" ordered Logan

Jameson and Ryan shot their Jackhammers in unison, sending two high powered rockets toward a drop ship. The rockets impacted inside the drop ship as it opened its doors to releases the Elites. The huge explosion shook the ship from head to foot; after few seconds the hovering craft fell down useless killing ten Elites with it.

"Hades, I have some guests for you," whispered Logan and opened up his assault rifle along with his team.

The fight was endless, huge amount of Covenants made landfall on this particular area. Soon the marines were outnumbered by ten to one. Every Pelicans, Warthogs, Scorpions (UNSC tanks) and Marines were shot down. Humans were losing fast. The re-enforcement was useless as they were shot down on mid air, so the remaining soldiers started to fall back, way back. Why are they destroying this particular area or Conquering it?

"Sir your orders?" asked Sunil from his hiding place. The whole city was a mess, structures were collapsed and streets were ruined by those high powered plasmas. The road was littered with rocks, bodies and blood.

Logan thought for a second. _Is it right to pull back? Was that a

cowardly act? Is it must to live another day to fight or stand your ground till your death? Too many questions._

"Let's pull back," he ordered, so he and his team sneaked out of the city to their base in their warthogs. But another shocker was waiting for them, there was no base left to go. Everything was gone period.

8. Chapter Seven

****Chapter 7:****

Rose

****36 Hours laterâ€|****

****July 18, 2552****

****Alpha Medical base****

****Planet Sigma Octanus IV****

2100 Hours

Logan woke up, opening his eyes slowly. The room was well lit and the lamp that hung above his head was bright, blinding him for few seconds. He rubbed his eyes and focused. He was inside a concrete room, covered with all types of medical equipments. The room was spacey and empty. Four more beds, similar to his, occupied the other end of the room.

He tried to get up but fell back painfully. His lower left part of the stomach ached causing tears to form in his eyes. He slowly peeked inside the covers and saw a white bandage around his belly, which was holding him tightly. He was naked waist above, save his trouser that covered his belly below.

He tried to remember how he ended up in here. The last thing he recalled was he and his team pulled back from Cote D' Azur to his base and found it completely destroyed. Then something happened, huge plasma or something hit his warthog from behind, causing a huge heat wave around him and flipped his vehicle end over end.

So I was blacked out, but how long? He asked himself. He tried to call but his throat was unusually dry and his lips were cracked. He checked the nearby table; it had a glass of water, so he got up a bit on his bed without minding the blinding pain and reached for it.

The water tasted like heaven even though it caused a slight irritation on his lower throat. He set the glass on the table and sat upright on the bed. His eyes were itching making him rub it often. He once again examined his wound, but it was neatly secured around his belly. Cote D' Azur came to his mind, he was wondering what had happened to that city. _Probably burned to ashes by the Covenants, _he thought miserably.

The door swung open and a woman walked in. She wore a long white lab coat over an ash colored gown. Her hair was neatly cut over her collars and her eyes bore a smart look. She looked at Logan and

offered a smile. Logan, who was looking at her beautiful black hair that matched her pale skin, smiled back awkwardly.

"How do you feel now sarge?" a sweet voice came out of her red lips and her hazel eyes were looking right into Logan's.

"I am fine thank you. What happened?" he asked

"You are brought down in here for medical attention," she replied and came near him

Logan strangely felt uncomfortable and shifted a bit. "Precisely, when did this happen?"

She took Logan's left hand and checked his pulse, "Yesterday to be precise."

"Oh," said Logan whose stomach was flipping uneasily. "Where am I, Miss?" he checked her name tag, and it read "_Rose Thomson_." Was that a Miss or Mistress he wondered

"Rose," she replied. "And you are in Alpha Medical facility, four miles from Cote D' Azur."

The sudden mention of the city's name brought back his duty sense. "What happened to Cote D' Azur?" he asked suddenly

Rose placed his arm down and scribbled something on a pad. "Its destroyed sergeant, every single piece of it." She smiled and left the room.

"Destroyed?" he murmured in disbelief

The room opened one more time and a young marine stepped in, he bore a hidden smile on his face. "How do you feel sarge?" he asked

"I am good Kelly. So is it true about Cote D' Azur?" Logan asked

"Yes sir!" a strange smile and excitement surfaced Kelly's face. "Every single Covenant bastards were killed sir, along with the city."

_What, did he hear that right? _Logan thought. "Explain it son," he asked

"Spartans sir, they saved a huge amount of civilians and destroyed the city with a nuke. The entire Covenant that made landfall on the city was destroyed. And we also won the space battle which occurred on the planet's orbit," said Kelly beaming

_Why he is so excited, is it because of the Spartans? _Logan thought. He knew perfectly what a Spartan is capable of doing, so this news didn't bring any new surprise to him, but finishing off a whole city which is populated by Covenant? That's amazing, even he have to admit it.

"What happened to us?" he asked as his mind shifted back to the present

"We got hit by a Wraith, sir. It flipped our warthogs causing us to retreat deep into the forest. Unfortunately you got hit on your stomach and bleed non-stop. We were worried so we stuffed some bio-foam on your wound and called for an evac and waited for the pelican. We witnessed the destruction of Cote D' Azur first hand." Kelly said "But we didn't see any Spartans though," he added with a sigh. "Then we got a ride to this medical base sir," he finished

"Anyone else hurt Kelly?" Logan asked

"No sir, nothing serious," the young marine replied. "Please take some rest, Doc's orders. She didn't allow all of our team members to enter, so I will go back and report to others."

"Ok Kelly, tell them that I am fine," he said

Kelly gave a salute and left the room. Logan gave back a lazy salute and rested his head on the soft pillow.

* * *

>July 19, 2552

Alpha Medical base

Planet Sigma Octanus IV

0500 Hours

"Good morning," Rose whispered as she entered the room. She had a computer pad on her hand along with a pen. She wore the same colored lab coat, but she wore different clothing inside - a white shirt with a black skirt.

Logan opened his eyes and sat up. "Good morning Doctor," he replied still admiring her beauty. He has worked with many female marines, but this was different. His heart beat rose a bit whenever she looked at him.

"How do you feel now sergeant?" she asked gently

"Names Logan, Doctor and I am fine," he forced a smile, but failed

"Alright Sergeant Logan-" she started...

"You can just call me Logan Doc," he replied quickly

"Then you can _just call me_ Rose," she replied back and Logan nodded.

"Can I look at your wound Logan?" she asked making Logan more uneasy

"Sure," he said uncertainly

She set her computer pad on the nearby table and approached him. Logan slowly straightened, clenching his hands to the covers. _Damn, why am I so afraid to a woman?_ He asked to himself and relaxed a

bit.

She took off the cover and watched his bandage keenly, and then she extended her hand to his stomach. Logan motioned her to stop, "Doctor, I mean Roseâ€¦I think I am fine," he said. He looked almost nervous and thanked that his team was not here to see him getting scared by a woman â€" a beautiful woman.

"But I need to see the woundsâ€¦now please try to relax I am not going to kill you," she replied

"Oh you won't?" he asked, smiling nervously and she chuckled

She took his hand away from his belly and set it aside gently, Logan's heart missed a beat, and then she slowly opened the bandage. _Ok, I am coolâ€¦I just need a distraction_ Logan thought, and looked all around the room. Then something odd struck him, there was a silver chain across Rose's left wrist. He examined it closely; the metal chain was neatly hooked with a small metal disc which had some ancient picture carved on it.

"What is that?" Logan asked even before he could realize what he said.

Rose took a moment to see Logan and then her wrist chain. "This is a bracelet," she said

"Braceâ€¦what?" Logan asked

"My father gave this to me. It's an extinct thing â€" a culture," she said thoughtfully. "Ancient people used to wear these but not anymore. Do you see this picture?" she asked pointing a small strange picture that was carved on the silver metal disc.

"That's called as a Rose, it's a flower. We can't see it anymore; my father was in love with this ancient plant, so he named me '_Rose_' and also gave this to me. It's my lucky ornament," she said as her eyes were searching the past memories.

Logan nodded as if he understood, but he still didn't get why would someone wear such a thing in a wrist?

After few slow seconds, Rose finally unwrapped the bandage and examined the wound. His lower left stomach was burned and blackened. She applied some medicine to the open wound, which stung like a needle and wrapped a fresh new bandage around it.

"The wound looks good to me. You have healed faster than I expected, take some rest now. I have to go," she said and turned

"Waitâ€¦" said Logan, suddenly an urge woke up in him which wanted to talk to her, but he didn't know what to say. "Can I get some water, I am bit thirsty," and gave a fake cough.

"Sure I will send someone," she said and left, closing the door behind.

"I don't want someoneâ€¦" murmured Logan totally unsatisfied with his actions around her. Somehow he liked her, not in a very official manner.

* * *

>1100 Hours

Boredom " for last six hours Logan did nothing other than stare at the vacant room unable move or talk to anyone. "Where the hell is everyone?" murmured Logan. His door must be sound proof or no one is outside, it was quite all the time. "If I stay here one more minute, I will go crazy," said Logan to himself and got up. Pain rose sharply from his waist to his spine. He almost collapsed, but his determination made him stronger. Without minding the pain, Logan set his bare foot on the floor, it was surprisingly cold. When his legs bore the weight of the body, another shot of pain rose.

He grinded his teeth sharply and kept his feet forward with a support of the bed's railing. Tears almost came out, when rows of pain clutched his sides. Ignoring it he set his second foot forward. "I am going nowhere with this," whispered Logan miserably. The feeling of being a handicapped worried him more than those Covenants.

As if someone read his mind, the door opened and Doctor Rose Thomson entered. She was awed and shocked to see Logan outside the bed on his foot. Logan, who was happy with the reaction, said, "Am I alone in this hospital or am I in some kind of isolated prison?"

Rose took a whole second to recover. "You are not supposed to get out of the bed," she said grabbing his arm.

Logan who was taken back by the sudden contact took a step forward and fell almost into her shoulders.

"Here," she took his arm around her shoulders and escorted him to the bed. "Please stay here and take some rest. You will hurt yourself if you try to move around."

"Ma'am I am a human being and it means I am a '_Social being_.' How do you expect me to be here all alone," he said

Rose who nodded her head in agreement replied, "I understand, but" she searched for the right word, but ended up agreeing with him. "Just hold on a second, I have something for you," she said and left the room quickly.

"Yea sure, I will wait here" I have all day with me," smirked Logan to himself.

After couple of minutes, Rose Thomson entered the room with a book in her hand. "Here take this," she handed the book to him. Logan took the book and examined it.

The book itself was old, very old but kept in a very good condition. The front cover had a woman standing near a lake, watching her reflection on the surface of the water. The title read, '_Where is he?_'

"It's a good book, one of my father's collections. It's about a girl who falls in love with a soldier." She stopped and then she added, "This might occupy you for few more hours."

Logan looked at the book and looked back at Rose. "A story book?" he asked as if he couldn't believe it. He doesn't even know if he has ever read one.

"Yes," she added slowly.

"So will this thing talk back to me, if I talk to it?" he asked sarcastically.

Rose smiled at him calmly and walked to the nearby table. She pulled a chair and placed it near his bed and sat on it. "Alright sir, what do you want to talk about?"

She sat on the chair with her hands on her lap and watched him with a beautiful smile. Logan's eye met her sweet hazel eyes. Both were staring at each other for few silent seconds, and then Rose shifted uneasily on the chair which made Logan to realize what he was doing - staring.

"I was just wondering, when I will be freed from this prison," he added slowly

"When you get alright-"

"And that will be when?"

"When you can walk without falling on the Doctors," she replied

Embarrassed, Logan nodded, "Fair enough."

"Good," she smiled. "Now please try to take some rest, while you can. I have to go," she said and got up. Once again Logan didn't want to be left alone; he wanted some company - especially hers.

She set the chair on its original place and walked out of the room gracefully.

9. Chapter Eight

****Chapter 8:****

The last Goodbye

****July 20, 2552****

****Alpha Medical base****

****Planet Sigma Octanus IV****

"Would you kiss her already?" said Logan in frustration.

He was reading the book, "Where is he?" given to him by Rose Thomson. For last two days he was occupying himself with this novel. He started by turning the pages in boredom, then he slowly started to read it page by page, now he was completely into it. All his life, he has only read Military stuffs not romantic novels, so this was interesting and intriguing.

"_She came near him and closed her eyes. The breeze touched her face, swaying her hair aside, leaving him to wonder how beautiful she looked. He grabbed her into his arms and kissed her"_

"Finally, thank you_" murmured Logan and closed the book because someone knocked the door. So, he quickly stuffed the book behind his pillow and sat with his back to it.

"Come in," he said

Five marines entered the room, closing the door behind them softly and gave him a sharp salute. Logan returned their salute and said, "At ease gentlemen."

Thomas, Jameson, Ryan, Sunil and Kelly relaxed and moved towards him. Kelly took a chair and sat on it, whereas Thomas and Jameson sat on the opposite bed and Ryan and Sunil stood near the bed's foot.

"So finally you guys found my room," said Logan sarcastically, looking at each and everyone

"Sorry sarge, they were so strict about letting people in. We tried but_" but Logan cut Ryan out.

"Enough said," Logan whispered

"So how do you feel sir?" asked Jameson concerned, he was the tallest in the group.

"I am fine," Logan replied without any enthusiasm

"So how is the treatment?" asked Sunil, he was the quietest one

"I think they are giving me the silent treatment, to make sure how fast I get crazy," smirked Logan, thinking about those lonely hours

"Jeez that's bad," commented Kelly

"Tell me about it," murmured Logan

"What's that sarge?" Kelly asked suddenly pointing at his pillow

"What?" Logan asked, acting innocent and pushed his pillow farther behind with his back, so that the book was almost invisible.

"This sir," Kelly extended his hand and picked up the book.

Damn your curiosity Kelly, Logan thought to himself. The last thing he wants his team members to see is this.

"It's a book Kelly," said Thomas from his place, when others craned their necks to get a better view of it.

"Ooh, it's a romantic novel," stated Ryan, who moved closer to Kelly

"Oh is it? I didn't get time to read it," lied Logan, but the truth was, he almost finished it.

Kelly passed the book to others, as they all took time to examine it.

"There's something written in here," he said and read it,

"_To my lovely daughter, Rose"_

The words were written clearly on a black pen, behind the front cover.

The marines looked up from the book and looked at Logan with a grin. Logan felt very uncomfortable.

"What are you smiling about?" he asked in general

"Does this _Rose_ stands for Doctor Rose Thomson, sir?" asked Jameson, who was smiling from ear to ear

"Maybeâ€|" answered Logan honestly, still trying to keep his voice even

"Sarge is inâ€|" Kelly started and Ryan finished it for him, "Love"

"What kind of nonsense is that?" Logan said, but inside him the word 'Love' echoed. It sounded so strange but the feeling was so pleasant. It was as alien as the Covenants, but as friendly as his life. Strange feelings arouse inside himâ€|_Dammit_.

"Don't make it to sound like a sissy thing guys. If you ask me 'Love' is a sacred thing," answered Kelly for Logan

"That's why no one is asking you Kelly," grinned Jameson

"Anyone can easily fall for her. Man, she is beautiful," commented Ryan

Logan felt a sudden rush of anger on Ryan. "Would you all just shut up? I am not in love, alright?" he said hotly.

"Sorry sir," said the marines in unison and fell silent.

"Well anyway, she is committed to someone else I guess," stated Ryan softly.

"What! To who?" asked Logan urgently even before he realized. Then he stopped and checked his words because Ryan started to smile again.

"I am just kidding sir. Just making sure whether you really meant when you said that 'You are not in love'." And he added quickly, "Sorry"

Logan couldn't help but smile back, "Soldiers like us - Love, family and kids are the last things we could worry about," he said silently and it was true.

All the marines remained silent and nodded in agreement. The door swung opened and Rose entered in with a walking stick in her hand.

The marines stood up quickly and turned towards the door. Rose stood still and watched them all.

"What is going on in here?" she asked. "Who let you all in?"

"Let's just say that we know someone at the front desk" but Jameson stopped because Kelly silently nudged him hard.

"This is not a visiting time and only one person is allowed to see the patient. Now please clear the room," she said, there was no trace of smile in her face.

"Take it easy Doc, we are leaving," said Ryan and all five turned towards Logan.

"Take care sir, if we don't evac now I am pretty sure Doctor Rose will smack us out with that stick," Jameson said smiling. Logan smiled back but stopped when he saw Rose roll her eyes on Jameson.

The marines saluted in unison and left the room, walking past Rose wishing her a good day. She closed the door behind them and came near him.

"Hmm, what put her in this mood?" Logan wondered to himself, because Rose was being everything other than cheerful.

She silently set the walking stick on the table and wrote something on a piece of paper, showing her back to Logan. Logan tried to steal a look at her writings but failed. After few seconds she turned around and faced Logan.

"Today, we will try to walk. This week will be dedicated to 'Physical Rehabilitation' strictly," she said

"Ok," finally the thought of mobility brought back some cheers to Logan.

"Now," she slowly took Logan's left arm and hoisted him. "Please try to take it easy, this might be painful."

Even though Logan didn't want to be supported, he didn't protest it. He slowly stepped out of the bed and planted his feet on the ground. This time the pain was much bearable than last time. Rose picked up the walking stick and gave it to him. Logan took it and sustained himself with it.

"How is it?" she asked

"Much better," replied Logan truthfully

"Today we will try to walk on the hallway for few hours, and then we will try to do some exercise" simple exercise," she said as she opened the door for him

Logan slowly and awkwardly walked towards it. Finally he saw what lay behind that steel door. The hallway was huge, lighted by powerful white lights. The door was indeed sound proof because it was bit crowded out here. Uniformed men and women patrolled along the hallway, accompanied by Doctors and assistances.

"We will try to walk till the gym, and then we will start some basic exercise," she said and helped him to walk. Logan nodded and started to keep baby steps.

For next couple of weeks, he severely and firmly worked hard. His developments were off the chart, even Rose exclaimed at his progress. Within matter of days Logan started to run one thousand yards and exercised with heavy dumbbells with ease.

* * *

>12 Days later🙏

August 1, 2552

Alpha Medical base

Planet Sigma Octanus IV

0900 Hours

"Wow, I am deeply impressed," commented Rose after seeing him run for five miles up and down on a open track. Logan, who was panting for breath stood near her and nodded. She gave him a bottle of water and he accepted it saying, "Cheers"

"I have never seen anyone recover this fast after a fatal plasma attack, if I should mention even if they do recover, they wouldn't be running around and lifting things like you," she added smiling at him

"What can I say? I am a natural," replied back Logan panting and smiling at the same time, and Rose laughed.

* * *

>1400 Hours

"So you are good to go," said Rose, after Logan signed some forms. She was still dressed on the same lab coat as beautiful as ever and Logan was fully dressed on his marine uniform and stood there looking slightly younger. The last couple of weeks, both Rose and Logan have developed a silent liking to each other, but it was still silent behind the dark.

"So that's it huh?" asked Logan as he set the pen down

"That's it," she replied. Her voice had disappointments but it was neatly covered over her ever smiling face.

This departure was so tough and rigid for Logan. Even though he wanted to say how he felt about her something stopped him 🙏 something. He stood there for couple of seconds searching for words, his hands were restless and his mind was jumpy. She stood in front of him and examined her bracelet deep in thoughts.

"Hem Hem," he cleared his throat and looked up. "Well I guess I better be going, duty calls," he said and smiled

Rose nodded and smiled back, this time her face clearly showed disappointments. She stepped forward and looked up at him, as if she wanted to say something but she dropped it at the last second. Logan who saw this felt even more depressing "no one had a gut to make a move.

"Then I should be going," he stated again, expecting a reply. But she just nodded and turned around. Disappointed, Logan slipped his hands into his pockets and something struck his fingers. "Oh, I almost forgot," he said and pulled out the book. "This belongs to you," and handed it to her. She accepted it with gratitude. "Thanks for that. It was good," added Logan

"Your welcome," she said

"Take care. I will...Maybe...uh...Good bye," those last words came out painfully

"You too, stay away from plasmas," she replied. Logan nodded and walked away caring a special feeling along with him. As Kelly said, this feeling was indeed sacred. He loaded the pelican outside along with his team mates and left the medical base never to return - He never saw her again.

10. Chapter Nine

****Chapter 9:****

The Reunion

****August 15, 2552****

****Unknown Debris****

****Slip space****

1700 Hours

UNSC battle ship, Wrecker entered the slipstream one hour ago from Planet Sigma Octanus IV. And it was currently in the slip space toward a random exit vector according to the Cole Protocol. Within five hours, the Wrecker will exit in a random part of the universe "away from inner and outer colonies, and will start traveling towards Planet Reach "the human's stronghold.

It was Logan Kelso's second transfer this year and he was not very happy about it. He always wanted to stay and fight in one place, but the ongoing war compelled him and his team mates to jump from one area to another. Blame the Covenant, thought Logan. But why would they send him to Reach, where the citizens are safe under the strict protection? Whereas many other planets were in dire need, he thought. Blame the ONI "came the reply from his head.

He got up from his seat and exited his room, which was shared by three more marines. He wore a khaki pant and white shirt on his torso. The marines quarters inside this particular battle ship was big, since its primary design was to transport large amount of soldiers at a time. Everywhere he turned, he met a group or groups of soldiers, including marines and ODSs walking around. It was bit

crowded in here, felt like he was cramped into an almost impenetrable _Titanium A_ battle armored walls.

He was bit drowsy and unsteady as the _Wrecker_ changed its position. He hated flying as much as he hated the Covenant â€" nothing was certain. His greatest fear of all was, dying in the space even before he could engage an alien one-on-one.

Pushing these fears aside he walked to the armory. Thomas and Kelly were sitting on a table with two M6D pistol on their hands. When they saw Sergeant Logan Kelso enter, they snapped into attention and said, "Good morning sir."

Logan nodded and said, "How the hell do you know this is morning? If I peek out of these windows all I see is nothingness."

"Just a guess sir," Kelly replied. "Are you alright, sir?" he added

"Yea I am, why?" Logan asked back as he looked around the armory

"Because you look like a person who is about to throw up," said Thomas

"It's this place," he said waving his hand towards the ship. "I hate flying."

"Oh, like Ryan I guess. That guy started to the vomit from the time he set foot on this ship," said Thomas.

"Is he alright?" asked Logan as he picked up a M90 Shotgun and examined it.

"He will be sir," replied back Kelly

"Good," Logan said still watching the shotgun. After few seconds he saw his team mates â€" Kelly and Thomas, stiffen. He looked up and saw three ODS soldiers enter the armory. They saw Logan and nodded to him as they walked past him. Logan nodded back silently and continued his examination.

"Alright I am gonna go back and take some rest. See you all later kids," said Logan and walked out

"Yes sir," the marines saluted behind him.

Logan went towards his room and laid on his bed. Some pleasant thoughts entered his mind randomly. He still remembered Rose Thomson, his first love. Her face always brought a faint smile on his wearied face. He dug his pant pockets and brought out a small colored picture. It had a beautiful looking, short haired woman grinning back at him and the picture was signed - "Rose." He managed to steal this particular picture from her office, when he entered the Sigma Octanus Medical facility, which feels like ages ago.

This was for her remembrance, things like this easily slipped away from his mind, so he carried this around all the time. Just to remember how it felt to be a normal human, once.

"Once this war is over, I will come for you," he whispered to the picture, then a painful thought stroke, "_If_ the war is over." After few deep thoughts he entered a deep dreamless sleep.

* * *

>August 18, 2552

Exit the Slip space

Planet Reach

The hull of the _Wrecker _shook violently for a second before it exited out from the slip space. The sudden moment caught Logan off guard and threw him off. He got up rubbing his head and checked his computer for status.

"_UNSC battle ship Wrecker has exited the Slip stream, entering the normal space and moving towards Planet Reach from a random vector"_

â€|the computer pad read. Logan threw the pad down and hurried to suit up. Within minutes the sirens will go on, hurrying the soldiers to reach the docking bay.

Just as Logan intended, the sirens went on, giving out a bright red light accompanied with a female voice, "The Ship has docked in RT-09 docking station, on planet Reach. All personnel prepare to unload the ship. I repeatâ€|" the voice continued.

Logan and his five team members carried their leather bags on their shoulders and walked towards the exit bay. They were accompanied by a platoon of marines and ODST.

"Its bit crowded in here," commented Ryan, who looked so pale

"Oh, you think?" asked Jameson sarcastically

"Please stand still and don't blink," a computer AI said to Thomas, who stood on a raised platform that checked everyone's retina. _One of few hundred Reach's security measures_, thought Logan.

"Jeez, that's kinda hard lady," Thomas said as he stood still and opened his eye wider

"Thank you. You are cleared to enter," the female AI voice reported, Thomas nodded in satisfaction and moved on.

After few retinas, voices and fingerprint checks, the five marines under Sergeant Logan Kelso entered the Pelican bay, where they will load one of these hundred Pelicans and reach their duty station on the ground.

* * *

>9 hours laterâ€|

August 18, 2552

Military airdrome

****Planet Reach****

1600 hours

Seven UNSC Pelicans landed on seven different landing pads and opened its compartment doors, revealing a big platoon of marines standing on the aft.

"Man, this place is so over protected," commented Jameson as he jumped down from the Pelican. "Are we gonna protect this planet or is it gonna protect us?"

"I don't think anything is gonna even scratch this planet," said Ryan who looked more than happy to have his legs planted on the firm ground.

"Let's pray that it stays that way," Logan said as he led his group towards the base.

He and his men were stationed on Alpha Medical facility, which was currently holding two hundred wounded soldiers, along with fifty eight medical personnel. This was a pure military structure, not one civilian can enter even a mile radius within this facility. _Too remote_, thought Logan with a grim face, as he looked around the facility on his personal hog.

"Alas, we are once again ended up in a Medical facility," stated Kelly who sat on the passenger seat. Logan nodded but didn't say anything.

"This place is huge," commented Sunil, who sat on a customized seat behind the hog, which replaced a machine gun.

"Yes," agreed Logan, he did notice that. "Everything is big in here."

"Yes sir," said Kelly and Sunil as they kept their gaze on the building

After their initial tour around the structure, Logan ordered his men to take shifts as they patrol the hospital every six hours and he went to his assigned room to take some rest. He felt unusually tired nowadays, especially after that fatal plasma attack. He was more than grateful to be back on his duty even after his hospitalization, because the UNSC needed all the capable men and women to fight. He was more than capable enough, he thought to himself, but some part of his body said the otherwise.

There was a soft knock on his door. Annoyed by the disturbance he said, "Come in."

The door swung opened and a very familiar face stepped in.

"Jesus Christ!" whispered Logan as he got up on his feet

"Howdy brother, what's up?" asked Jen Fell as he entered the room.

"Jen, what the hell are you doing here?" asked Logan whose face was

filled with astonishment and surprise.

"After Jericho seven, they reassigned me to Reach," he said as he shook Logan's hand and sat on a chair. He looked so old and matured. Surprisingly he had grey hairs over his ears.

"I never knew pal," Logan expressed his pleasant surprise

"I know. So what about you?" he asked

"I was assigned to Sigma Octanus four, after our little trip to Jericho."

"I see. So you are a Sergeant I see" Jen said grinning

"Yea just like you," commented Logan after seeing Jen's name tag "Sgt. Jen Fell"

"So you are here for what? Six, seven years?" asked Logan as he tried to remember the last time he saw his friend.

"Yea, something like that" Are you alright?" Jen asked as concerned lines passed over his face

"I am fine," Logan said as he wiped his sweat away from his forehead for the umpteenth time

"You look like a grandfather bro," he said smiling

"Really?" Logan laughed. "Well that's what happens when you have a fatal plasma attack."

Jen's face shrunk as he heard that, "fatal attack?"

"Yea had a little friendly fire between a wraith, but he was not so friendly," he added smiling

"Are you fine now?" he asked once again

"I am good," assured Logan

Jen nodded still unconvinced.

"So, how did you know about my whereabouts?" Logan asked

"Well I came here to see my friend in the hospital; you know to have a friendly chat. Then I saw your name on the security list," he said

There was something different the way he said, "My friend."

"What's wrong with your friend?" asked Logan

"Had an accident with a grenade," he said

"Oh, is he in your team?" Logan asked

"He, Who?" asked Jen confused

"The one who had the accident,"

"No sir, and it's a '_She_', " Jen corrected

"Oh," Logan started, he knew this, but he didn't press on it.

"So how long have you been stationed here?" he asked Logan

"Just landed freshly and I have no idea why would they put an active soldier such as me on such a dead planet," said Logan thinking deeply

"What do you mean by dead planet?" Jen asked

"Well this is the stronghold of human empire, and we know for sure that this place will be free of Covenant, then why put platoons of marines in this place?" he asked

"Dunno, maybe someone behind the desk is feeling very uncomfortable," Jen said

"Yea maybe," Logan murmured back

"So take care Logan, I will see you later. I have to go back to my base now," said Jen as he stood up and Logan's face showed disappointment.

"Where is your base?"

"Its Beta-9I, five miles away from here," Jen said. "I will see you sometime later, now I really have to hurry," he smiled

"Sure," Logan stood up and shook his hand one more time. "Give my wishes to you 'Special Friend'" Logan smiled

"Sure I will," Jen replied who smiled back and left the room

"It's damn good to see you brother," Logan whispered when the door shut tightly.

11. Chapter Ten

****Chapter 10:****

So, this is how it ends!

****August 30, 2552****

****UNSC Reach Medical facility****

****Planet Reach****

0000 Hours, Midnightâ€¦!

Logan woke up panting from his bed. Sweat ran all over his face as he got up from his bed and took some deep breaths. The room was still dark, except for his digital clock which read 12:00 am. _It was just a bloody dream_, Logan thought with a deep relief. For last few days he has been having these terrible nightmares, which scared him to his death. Something about them bothered him, they were about the

Covenant of course, but it was different. He was standing on this battlefield alone, staring at the sky. Then a huge shadow covers him. When he tried to hide, it followed him. So he stood on his ground and faced it, some part of him said no, whereas his gut said yes. But before he can make up his mind, he gets " that's when he wakes up, panting and wheezing. _What the hell is happening to me_ worried Logan, because for last few days he has been having some uncomfortable feelings about this planet. This was one of the humans' strongest fortresses, but instead of feeling safe he felt so vulnerable.

He went back and laid on his bed. He couldn't sleep now because he was wide awake. _This is the reason why I feel so tired on my duty hours_, thought Logan. So he forced himself to close his eyes, but it was useless. He pushed his covers off and walked to his study table. A book laid on it undisturbed. The cover read, "_Near death experiences_." He got this book when he cleaned his unused locker, like Rose's this book was ancient. He opened the book randomly and read,

"_When I laid down there alone, I thought I was dead and indeed I was dead or at least almost dead. Suddenly a bright white light covered my eyes, I couldn't blink it off, and it was too damn bright to stare at. Then out of nowhere my childhood experiences came to my mind. My brain started to shoot random memories in to my head for no reason, or is there a purpose to it? I couldn't shake them off too_"

Logan turned another page aimlessly even before he could finish the previous line.

"_This is what they call it as 'Near death experience'_" he closed the book and pondered on the words, 'Near death experience.' _I have shit load of that_, he murmured and tossed the book away.

He stood there for a second silently and thought about his childhood experiences. Unfortunately nothing came into his mind; they all seemed as if a lifetime ago. Pushing those thoughts away he walked to his table drawer and opened it. Papers, pens and many other junks were stuffed inside, but he was looking for one special thing that he kept as a treasure " there, he took a small picture of Rose Thomson. For the first time, that picture looked so distant " as if she was a stranger. He cleared his eyes with back of his palm and looked at it again; once again he got that distant feeling. "Everything is so funny today," he whispered and pocketed the picture. He yawned widely and saw the time " 12:07 am. "I better grab some sleep," he thought and went back to his bed.

* * *

>0400 Hours<

Logan woke up as his alarm went on. He hastily pushed the 'Off' switch on it and raised his head to see the time. It seemed like a minute ago he was walking around this room fully awake, but now his eyes were so red and itchy, he felt like he was going to be attacked by laziness. "Yea right_" he smirked at his thought and got to his feet. He wore some shorts and went to the gym for some exercise.

"Good morning sir," said Sunil as Logan entered the gym. Sunil was the only person who was occupying the whole room.

"You are out bit early," Logan said, because today was Sunil and Jameson's rest day from last night shift.

"Well yes sirâ€|" he looked as if he was going to say something, but remained quite, something was bothering him. He was the quietest in the whole group. Logan has always wondered whether Sunil was a bit shy in nature or just lost interest in everything due to the war.

After one hour of workout, Logan left the room once again leaving Sunil alone whose company seemed to be more dead than alive. He went back to his room, took a shower and wore his marine suit. The uneasy feeling was freaking him out, it started to form a pit inside his stomach. "It's going to be a big day, for no reason," Logan murmured to his reflection on the mirror and walked out.

* * *

>0545 Hours

"Something is so different. Today is neither like yesterday nor any other day," commented Ryan, who looked so worried.

"Yea, you are right bro, something is so weirdâ€|"Good morning sir," Thomas saluted along with Ryan as they saw Logan enter the Lunch hall for some breakfast.

Logan said, "At ease gentlemen," and he went to grab his food tray. After few minutes he came back and shared the table with his marines.

"Soâ€|" Logan started with an unsure tone, because both Ryan and Thomas were just merely playing with their spoons on the food tray, none have seemed to touch the food yet.

"Sir?" Ryan asked as both of them looked up.

"You kids look like in some kind of trouble," Logan said judging by their expressions.

"It's just myâ€|"gut feeling sir, even Ryan has it," said Thomas, whose voice was carrying away.

"What gut feeling?" Logan stomach made a back flip, something was strange. He has never seen Thomas like this before.

"It's just odd, I had a bad dream last night and now I am having some kind of panic attack," Thomas said and forced a smile.

Logan knew exactly what he meant, but he didn't show anything out. "It's just this place, nothing to worry about. When a soldier in not in a combat he always gets restless andâ€|" Logan searched for the right word, "You knowâ€|" he finished, because this can not be a co-incidence. He has always followed his gut feelings and have respected others too, so this somewhat contradicted him. "Well, we will see," he said and started to eat without uttering another word.

* * *

>0630 Hours

"Oh no!" exclaimed Sunil

Alarms went on all over the building, judging by the noise it sounded as if all hell broke lose. Fear and chaos arouse among the staffs and patients. Logan and his men tried to calm the people, but gave up when another beeping sound joined the alarm.

"What the hell is going on Thomas?" shouted Logan

Thomas hurried to the nearby satellite radio and switched it on. A rough male voice echoed throughout the building.

"_Planet Reach is under attack. The UNSC Battle ships are engaging the enemy now. I repeatâ€|"_

The greatest fear of Logan and all mankind came true, Reach was under attack. The news hit him like a truck, so he stood there stunned.

"_All ground team, prepare toâ€|"_

The radio continued, but Logan couldn't listen to the rest because people started to yell in fright. A huge wave of panic rushed over them.

"Sir, we are getting orders from General Louis Smithâ€|here," Thomas handed the radio to Logan.

"Sir!" Logan said into the radio

"A band of soldiers are on their way to the medical facility in order to take the wounded and the non-military personnel to safety. Take your men and meet me at the military headquarters on the double sergeant," the rough voice of General Smith roared. His voice was filled with surprise and fear.

"Sir, yes sir," Logan said and gave out the necessary orders.

* * *

>0700 Hours

More than one thousand marines reached the Military HQ within next few minutes and more were on the way. An ominous feeling of mystery and fear was among them. Even the most organized and efficient soldiers started to stagger and wobble under this sudden and unexpected pressure. Teams were divided into many groups and were sent all over the planet. Some where assigned to save all the bunk and military structures; whereas others were sent to protect the innocents and the rest were sent to protect the most important thing of all â€" The Orbital Defense Generators. If one of these things was obliterated, the most powerful MAC guns will be wiped out, and then the Planet will fall.

Logan and his team members along with one more team were sent to

protect the B-207 facility, which was ten miles away from here. The only good thing that occurred among this chaos was his reunion once again with his friend, Jen Fell. Jen and his team were also assigned to protect the same generator, just like Logan.

"Just like the old times," Jen said nodding towards Logan

"Yes," Logan replied back. He felt once again new and refreshed as he walked along with his most trusted team, and with his old true friend, "Old times." The team loaded the Pelican and left immediately to the site on the double.

* * *

>0759 Hours

The Pelican landed in front of B-207 facility and unloaded its passengers. Logan and Jen's team members jumped down from the Pelican and ran towards the generators. Once everyone was unloaded, the Pelican took off and flew away as if it was being chased. Logan looked up and saw hundreds of UNSC Pelicans, along with Longswords, flying all over the sky, dropping and picking up troupes. The sound was deafening, everybody could feel the terror which they are about to face.

The B-207 generator was located inside a huge forest clearing, which's back faced a huge mountain. Heavy metallic sounds can be heard from inside the facility as if a Lion's roar. Everyone knew that it was as active as a volcano. The structure had a huge fence around it, made out of solid rock and it had five automatic machine guns mounted on every side. It felt like a fortress in and itself because there was a pit which covered the fence.

"Alright, lets give names," Jen called out. "My team will be the Charlie team and yours will be the Alpha team," Jen said pointing at Logan.

Logan nodded, "Alpha take the machine guns." Kelly, Thomas, Jameson, Sunil and Ryan took the five automatic machine guns and loaded it.

"Charlie team, arrange all the ammunitions we have in order and be ready to supply it to the Alpha team at demand. And take the flanking position," Jen ordered and his team members obeyed.

"We used to be in one team," Jen smiled. "I used to give the orders and you take them."

Logan smiled back, "Today I will give the orders and you will take them."

* * *

>0820 Hours

"â€|Stay there, _Sir_ we are under attackâ€|Take him, Take him, NO...Enemies on our doorstep, I repeatâ€|" the radio was barking, as Jen and Logan listened to it. Random and fierce voices raised and died within the radio. Occasionally curses entered it too as the soldiers fought in pain.

"Do you thinkâ€|?" Jen started

"No," Logan answered at once. He knew perfectly what Jen was about to say because the same question was haunting him too, _Will the Reach fall?_

A huge rumble shook the whole place, along with a very vociferous noise.

"What is happening in here?" Logan whispered as he and his whole team mates looked up. The sky blackened for a second, covering half the sky as if a solar eclipse took place. After a crack second, a huge silver ship entered the Planet's atmosphere. Neither Logan nor his men has ever seen anything like this before. It was strangely beautiful to look at. The nose of the ship burned as it came down from the space, and then it changed its position in a manner, that its belly was parallel to the land below.

The body of the ship reflected the sun, blinding the marines for a second. Number UNSC Pelicans, who tried to move away from the alien ship, failed and crashed into it. However, none of the ships collided directly with the ship's body; they hit something invisible and dropped down in huge flames. Longswords bombarded the huge Covenant ship with missiles and bombs, but none affected the ship, because none touched the ship. Something silvery shimmered around its body and faded as if nothing happened.

"Shields," Jen whispered

The ship stopped its descending when it was two hundred feet above the surface. Then as if someone switched off its engine, the sound of the ship silenced and stood there as a statue, motionless. It was just a mile away from Logan and Jen's position, but still it looked as if they were standing right below it. The ship itself was a kilometer long.

"What do we do now sir?" Kelly asked whose voice betrayed fear in great amount.

Logan had nothing to say, what _can_ he do against this?

After three minutes of speculation, a loud voice entered the radio.

"HELP, we are under attack. We need immediateâ€|Argh," an anguish sound came through it. "We need reinforcement; I repeat we need reinforcement onâ€| Delta three by fourâ€|No, take him downâ€|Delta three by four, pleaseâ€|" the voice died away.

Jen looked up at the alien ship and looked at the radio, as if he was making a decision. Logan knew exactly what he thought, so he extended his hand towards Jen. "Take care brother," Logan said.

Jen took his hand and shook it, "We will meet again," he said and went to aid the Delta along with his team.

"God's speed," whispered Logan as he saw, Jen and his team splint away.

Suddenly the alien ship came back to life and the belly of the ship glowed brightly.

"What is it doing sir?" Thomas asked nervously

"I don't know," Logan answered honestly

After few startling moments, a huge sound came out of the ship, as if a siren. Then a huge purple light descended from its belly.

"Oh no!" whispered Sunil

"Jameson, take Thomas, Sunil and Ryan, and see what they are doing exactly. I need video Intel; you will be the Charlie team. Go now. Do not engage the enemy. Remember that, once you get the idea, come back here at once. Do you understand me," barked Logan

"Sir, yes sir," said Jameson back. The four marines saluted to Logan and went towards the ship.

"Kelly, take those weapons and drop into the pit now," Logan said, and Kelly obeyed.

Logan took the radio with him and dropped beside Kelly and watched carefully.

After few minutes, "Sir," the radio opened

"Go ahead Jameson," Logan replied back to the radio

"This purple light is some kind of transporting thing, its not on of their plasma. They are unloading a large amount of troupes down through this," Jameson said. Judging by his voice, Logan can clearly say that he was terrified.

"Lookâ€|" Ryan's voice entered the radio. "What the hell is that?" he asked

"What is it?" Logan demanded, but there was nothing but silence.

Slowly Sunil's calm voice came through, "Have we not seen one of those before?"

"What is it?" Logan demanded again

"SHIT!" shouted Jameson

"Whatâ€|?" but Logan stopped when he heard a deafening scream of agony.

"Charlie team! Charlie team, come in!" Logan shouted, but he will never hear a response again.

* * *

>Author's comment*: _As you can see, the story has reached it's climax. The next chapter will be the last chapter of this series. Please Read and Review it! Thank you._

P.S**:** I am working on the last chapter right now, I will update it as soon as possible.

* * *

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12. Chapter Eleven: The End

****Chapter 11:****

The End of the beginning

****August 30, 2552****

****Orbital Defense Generator, B-207****

****Planet Reach****

Sergeant Logan Kelso looked out of his drench slowly. All he could see was a covenant cruiser hovering over the surface of Planet Reach, unloading its ground force. He eased back into his pit and switched on his radio.

"This is Alpha, come in Charlie team. I repeat, come in Charlie Team," he barked. Nothing but static filled the radio.

"I don't think they made it sir," said Kelly, who sat with him, inside the pit.

"Don't give up your hope," he whispered back. Even though he knew Kelly was damn right, however, he refused to accept it. The thought made his stomach to dive uneasily.

"I don't see any hope sir," complained the young marine. His voice had no expression and his face had no light. He looked like a living dead.

Logan turned around and met the young man's eye and said, "What are you talking about? You are still alive, I am still aliveâ€|now that's a bad news to those Covenant bastards," he forced a smile, "There is always hope. Find it Kelly."

Kelly nodded his head and looked down at his assault rifle. Logan has never seen his team member like this before; they always stick together till the end, but Kelly gave up too fast, as if his beliefs, motives and goals were gone. But of course, he can't blame him, after all his team â€" family, was dead. _You are aâ€|_ Logan cursed himself.

"Charlie team, do you hear me? Over," he tried once again. There was no answer. He threw his radio in frustration and guilt, which startled Kelly for a second.

"ARGH," Logan shouted and buried his face into his hands.

"I give up," muttered Logan. All now that is left of his greatly treasured team was he and Kelly. The thought made a tear to escape from his eye lid; he pushed it away and took a deep breath.

"We two can't protect the generator, we need back ups. Call for reinforcement," ordered Logan. His face was grim and expressionless.

Kelly picked up the radio and did as the Sergeant ordered. After few minutes, he gave Logan a negative answer.

"That's it, I am going in. I can't wait till they come and get us. I am taking the fight to them. Load up Kelly. We are going to _fight together_ or we _die together_," he said firmly and loaded his MA5B Assault rifle.

The ammunition read full, he checked his own armory. They had two M90 Shotguns, three M6D pistols and two SSM Rocket launchers.

"Take the rocket launcher, a shotgun, some fragmentation grenades and extra shells for your shotgun," said Logan to Kelly, and he obeyed.

Logan took some extra clips for his own Assault rifle, picked up a rocket launcher and grabbed some of the Covenant's plasma grenades. He checked his weaponries one last time and gave a move-out sign.

Sergeant Logan and Kelly jumped up from the pit and crouched to the nearby trees. The sky was unusually pale due to the air, which was hot and burning.

Sweat dripped from Logan's forehead as the temperature increased every minute. This was not his first experience to be trapped in a planet that was going to be glassed. He has been and seen Covenant's glassing before. However, he has previously escaped, but was not so sure about this time.

Both the soldiers leveled themselves to the ground and watched the alien's battle cruiser through their binoculars.

The silver ship was hovering over a hundred feet above the ground and a huge purple light connected the belly of the ship and the solid ground. Multiple troops were making landfall through the bright light.

Hundreds of them landed on the surface in groups â€" Elites, Jackals, Grunts and Hunters. They all formed a camp within their territory and waited, _for what_? Logan wondered.

"You see that shade Kelly?" he pointed a Covenant's stationary gun, which was located near a tent. Kelly shifted his focus to it and nodded.

"That tent, near the shade, has Covenant weapons, I think. And I am pretty sure they have loads of these Plasma grenades," he took one from his jacket and showed it. "If we shoot at the Shade, it will explode like a balloon and will cause a chain reaction among the grenades. That fire power can kill those pair of hunters," he whispered.

"Once we clear those guys, we are going to use our remaining rockets to take down those immobile banshees. Then we move in and unleash a

hell among them," he stopped and fixed his eye on Kelly's. "Son, I am not going to say that we will make out of here alive. This is a one way ticket. Are you ready for this?" Logan knew he was asking too much from his fragile team mate. But he was the team leader, so he did and will not hesitate to sacrifice his life " but what about his team?

Kelly took a moment to look at the sergeant's face and the Covenant's. "Sir, I am with you. Lead the way," he replied briskly and gave a wearied smile. Logan returned the smile and turned away to meet their doom.

"On my mark!" Logan said and steadied himself with the rocket launcher on his shoulder. "Mark"

Kelly and he got up and shot their 102 mm high powered rockets toward the Shade.

The rockets impacted the shade and blew it up into pieces. The explosion and the fire did exactly as Logan intended, started a chain reaction. The Grenades blew in unison and knocked the pair of Hunters out of the action.

This sudden attacked startled the Covenant ground force. Grunts and Jackals looked around nervously. Elites ran towards their banshee, unfortunately those flying machines exploded into plumes of fire, when another pair of rockets impacted.

Logan and Kelly threw their empty SSM Rocket launchers and dived into the mist of the aliens " _mist of their death_.

Shards of needles and plasma hit the soldiers squarely on their chests. Both fell down the moment the needles exploded.

Kelly died on the spot, with a heavy plasma burn on his face and chest. Logan took the hit on his lower side of the stomach and fell down paralyzed.

Pain washed through his body. He could feel the burned skin and flesh, but he couldn't move. His spine ran cold and his head ached severely. His mouth twitched as blood leaked out causing him to yell in pain silently. The only thing that stirred was his eyes, which rotated within its socket as if it got a fit.

All he could see was the belly of the Covenant's battle ship " the same shadow. His vision faded for a second causing a complete darkness but it came back. He could feel his low heart beat which thumped within him, meaninglessly. Things started to move slowly to Logan as his brain started to grow numb. He tried to look for Kelly, but he failed, all he could see was this shadow hovering over him. He felt disoriented and bewildered.

White lights flashed in front of him. It flashed with his heart beat. He could feel his muscles tighten and relax as weird thoughts entered his mind.

The white light was so bright it blinded him for a full second. He closed his lid and opened it, the light was still there. The sound of the Covenant, the battle, the fire went mute as if someone turned down the volume - Everything was dead still.

An unusual peace came over him and he was free of pain. The bright light faded as he saw a small boy running around with a toy plane on his hand. Then the same young boy turned into an adult and ran along with group of other boys in a boot camp. The adult turned into a fierce soldier and shot every alien down with his rifle. After few seconds of these perplexed thoughts, he felt a heavy heat suspended over his paralyzed face. He opened his eyes and saw an eight foot tall Elite standing above him with a plasma rifle at its hand, pointing at his face.

Hopelessly, Logan tried to move, but all he could do was move his face an inch or so to his left. Suddenly, as if someone turned on the radio to its full volume, sounds came to existence. He could hear the high squeal and barks from the aliens along with a huge roar. Something was so different about this roar, it sounded like an UNSC Warthog. After a split second, just like Logan thought a green hog jumped above him, knocking the Elite off and landed between him and the aliens, forming a shield.

To his greatest surprise, the person who was driving the hog and the person who was spraying hails of bullets on the surprised Covenant were Spartans. Those green armored super humans has once again have come to help him at the perfect moment. But was it really a perfect time?

Before he could move any further, the Spartan who drove the hog jumped out and carried Logan to the vehicle.

"Kellyâ€¦Kellyâ€¦" Logan muttered to the Spartan, but the armored human just looked at him. He wasn't sure what the Spartan was thinking, but he knew one thing though, it looked like the Spartan asked, "What?"

"My teamâ€¦Kellyâ€¦soldierâ€¦near," Logan tried, but the Spartan ignored it and laid him gently on the foot of the LAAG. Logan wasn't sure whether they were still fighting the aliens or did they just eliminated all of the ground force, but he was so keen about his team member. He did not want to leave his men behind, so he turned over from his prone position and tried to look outside the hog. But the Spartan who was operating the LAAG caught him before he stumbled out of the vehicle. Logan tried to resist, but he absolutely had no power.

"He is dead," muttered the Spartan as if he read his mind. "Now, stay still. Get us out of here," The Spartan barked

"Roger," said the other Spartan and put the pedal to the metal. The hog flew away from the location and sped towards the Orbital defense generator.

"He is bleeding, hand me that foam," shouted the Spartan, who disengaged himself from the LAAG and bent over toward Logan. Logan wasn't sure what was happening, he felt so dizzy. Suddenly a sharp pain rose from his belly and realized that the Spartan was filling him up with bio-foams. His breathing became shallow as the pain rose to the unbearable limit. But still it didn't trouble him. The only thing that hot and bothered around his head was this horrible news. No matter what his gut told him, he still couldn't accept the ill news â€" his team was gone, forever. _Soon I will be too_; Logan

thought and closed his eyes.

The Hog shook violently as its massive tires ran over the uneven landscape. All of a sudden the hog stopped abruptly, causing Logan to hit the side metal. Then he was gently lifted away from the vehicle and placed on a cool brick floor.

"It looks like he is the last one left in his team," murmured one of the Spartans

"Yes I think soâ€¦" but their voices dissolved into Logan's agony. He tried to get up, but he fell back in pain.

"Take it easy," said one of the Spartans. "So did you and your team were protecting this facility?"

Logan nodded. "There is no one leftâ€¦" Logan said, "We have ordersâ€¦"

The Spartan nodded and looked around. "If we place our machine guns over that areaâ€¦" he said as he pointed his finger before him, "We might be able to repel themâ€¦" once again Logan felt lost, so their words went unheard.

He closed his eyes and tried to relax. Once again the surrounding sounds went mute.

Logan opened his eyes and saw a corn field. He knew this place, this was his home world. A bunch of kids were running all over the place shouting, "Tag." Logan gently moved towards them, but he stopped when that vision dissolved into a huge structure. Now he saw one hundred young adults standing in front of a strong man. Logan knew him, he was Chief Jason Gibson. He was shouting orders to the young adults, who wore just a pant and a torn undershirt. When Logan tried to move out of their way, he tripped and fell down. When he got up he saw a whole new picture. He was standing near a beach, everything looked quite and nice, but all of a sudden he heard a huge explosion. When he turned around he saw a group of marines repelling a bunch of aliens. The lead marine ran in front of them and called out "Logan, over here." He knew that voice; it was Jen, his old friend. When he saw Jen trip and fell down, he ran towards him shouting, "Jen watch out." But Logan fell down and went unconscious. When he woke up, he was lying inside a room filled with bright lights. He strained his eyes and looked around, there was a woman standing near him. "Hey Logan, how do you feel now?" she asked. "Rose?" Logan whispered. "Yes you silly," she answered back smiling. Logan smiled and touched her._

"I AM LOSING HIMâ€¦" a voice echoed inside his head. Logan tried to ignore it, but the dream which he was seeing dissolved as he opened his eyes. The sounds once again came back and rang inside his ear.

"â€¦Stay with me pal. Alex, hand me that!" shouted the Spartan. Logan looked around; it took him a full heart beat to clear his eyes. He was inside the same facility and the two Spartans, who saved him, were fighting fiercely. One of the Spartans, who drove the hog, was treating his wound, Logan could feel the harsh burn on his stomach, but he did not flinch. The sounds started to dissolve once again; Logan cleared his throat and said, "Sirâ€¦"

The Spartan looked up. Logan raised his right hand very slowly to his head. It took all of his strength to raise his hand and gave a small salute to the Spartan. "Thank you," he whispered and closed his eyes forever. After two heart beats, his breath stopped and he joined his dead team mates for eternity.

****THE END****

End
file.